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REPORTS

FROM

COMMITTEES:

SIXTEEN VOLUMES.

—(9.)—

HAND LOOM WEAVERS;

CORN TRADE;

MR. GOLDSWORTHY GURNEY.

Session

19 *February*——10 *September* 1835.

VOL. XIII.

1835.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

1835.

SIXTEEN VOLUMES:—CONTENTS OF THE

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REPORT

FROM

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

HAND-LOOM WEAVERS' PETITIONS;

WITH

THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

AND INDEX.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,*
1 *July* 1835.

341.

Lunæ, 9° die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT a Select Committee be appointed to examine the Petitions presented to The House (during the last and present Sessions) from the Hand-loom Weavers, and to Report their Observations thereupon to The House.

And a Committee is appointed of,—

Mr. John Maxwell.
Mr. Brotherton.
Sir James Graham.
Mr. John Fielden.
Lord Ashley.
Mr. Bolling.
Lord Viscount Morpeth.
Mr. Fleetwood.
Mr. Richard Alexander Oswald.
Mr. Gillon.
Mr. O'Dwyer.
Sir Eardley Wilmot.
Mr. Thomas Attwood.
Mr. William Williams.
Mr. Wakley.
Mr. Plumptre.
Mr. Henry Stanley.
Mr. Hallyburton.
Mr. Emerson Tennent.
Mr. Mullins.
Mr. Henry Lytton Bulwer.
Lord Francis Egerton.
Mr. Graham Speirs.
Mr. Cayley.
Mr. Ainsworth.
Mr. Fitzsimon.
Sir John Beckett.
Lord John Scott.
Mr. Harland.
Mr. Oliphant.
Mr. Hardy.
Captain Wemyss.
Mr. Aglionby.
Captain Gordon.
Sir Henry Parnell.
Mr. Robinson.
Lord Stanley.
Mr. George Frederick Young.
Mr. Blamire.
Mr. Baines.
Mr. Wallace.
Mr. Mark Philips.
Lord Dudley Stuart.
Mr. Turner.
Mr. Fox Maule.
Mr. Buckingham.
Mr. Fergus.
Mr. Forbes.
Mr. Matthias Attwood.
Lord James Stuart.
Mr. Brocklehurst.
Earl of Euston.
Mr. Bannerman.
Lord Viscount Stormont.
Mr. Edward Southwell Ruthven.
Mr. Walker.
Mr. Bootle Wilbraham.
General Palmer.
Mr. Poulett Thomson.
Mr. Baring.
Dr. Bowring.
Mr. O'Connell.
Mr. Thorneley.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers and Records.

Ordered, THAT Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Veneris, 13° die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT Sir Michael Shaw Stewart and Mr. Entwisle be added to the Committee.

Ordered, THAT Mr. Dugdale be added to the Committee.

Lunæ, 30° die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT Mr. Leader be added to the Committee.

Mercurii, 1° die Julii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to report the Minutes of the Evidence taken before them from time to time to the House.

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REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to examine the PETITIONS presented to The House during the last and the present Sessions, from the HAND-LOOM WEAVERS, and to Report their Observations thereupon, and who are empowered to Report the MINUTES OF THE EVIDENCE taken before them from time to time to The House;—— HAVE examined the Matters referred to them, and have agreed to the following REPORT:

YOUR COMMITTEE having examined the Petitions referred to them, have found them to contain allegations of the distressed state of the Petitioners, with prayers for relief, in which suggestions as to the means were in most cases propounded. Your Committee therefore entered upon an examination of Witnesses, first, as to the truth and the extent of the alleged distress; second, as to the causes of that distress; and third, as to the equity and practicability of the several remedies proposed by the Petitioners and others. And your Committee, in proceeding with a long-protracted examination, have summoned before it Master Manufacturers, Operative Weavers, and persons who may be described as observing By-standers; all of them either practically acquainted with the Trade and its workings, or well acquainted with the condition, the habits and the sentiments of both masters and men.

Your Committee have examined Witnesses of the description above named, from several districts of the North of England, from the Manufacturing Towns of Scotland, and from the North of Ireland; and the first observation that suggests itself to their minds, is, that the distress which the Petitioners described as so extreme, is fully verified by the Witnesses; and that it is not confined to one district of the United Kingdom, but is general throughout every part of it, where Hand-loom Weaving is the mode of manufacture; this being proved to the satisfaction of Your Committee by the number of Witnesses speaking to and agreeing on the same facts, and rendered indubitable by the circumstances that they are men differing as to their sphere of life, in their political opinions, and the country of their abode.

It will not be expected that Your Committee should enter upon an exact summary of the vast body of Evidence that they have heard; but, for the sake of method, they have adhered to the division above given, and now proceed to state to The House the facts related to them by Witnesses from divers places in each country, England, Scotland and Ireland, taking their facts from such Witnesses respectively as answer to the description given above.

Commencing with *Glasgow*, Your Committee find, that according to the Evidence of Mr. *Hugh Mackenzie*, p. 41 of the Minutes, the Hand-loom Weavers

were formerly, that is 40 years ago, a frugal and industrious people, supporting many Friendly Societies, building their own houses with their own saved-up means, supporting their families in the usual comforts of life, living upon meat, oatmeal, bread and milk; rearing up their children in good clothes, and educating them at Sunday Schools. They are described as having built their houses partly on borrowed money, not being in a condition to build and finish them without assistance; but, of a large part of the neighbourhood of Glasgow so built, it is stated to Your Committee, that by successive reductions in wages, a great part of the Weavers have been ejected from their houses by the mortgagees who lent them the money wherewith to finish them; that, in point of food, the Weaver now rarely tastes meat, not more than once in a month; that he is reduced to bread and buttermilk, with butter occasionally, or with potatoes or porridge; that his clothing is scant, if not rags; that, to this he has become inured, in so far that he is not ashamed to appear among his own class in such attire, but that old recollections still hang about him, and that he refrains from attending Public Worship as formerly, and takes "skulking walks in the country" on a Sunday, rather than appear before the world in rags; that the Friendly Societies to which he formerly subscribed have gone down, owing to his inability to make his quarterly payments; and that this is the general condition of the Glasgow Weaver at the present time, though not a hand is idle. The earnings of the Weavers are stated to be 8 *s.* per week for the best and ablest hands, and from this a deduction is to be made of 1 *s.* 4 *d.* or 1 *s.* 6 *d.* for oil, loom-rent, wear and tear, gears, &c. The earnings of the greater part, however, being far less; of some not more than 4 *s.* or 5 *s.*, and the average not exceeding 6 *s.*, with the same deductions incident to them. The hours of labour are stated at 13 or 14 hours a day; and of those who earn 8 *s.* per week, every hour of the day, not necessarily devoted to meals.

By the Evidence of Mr. *James Orr*, p. 60 of the Minutes, Your Committee are informed, that the Weavers of Paisley were, till within the last 25 years, a flourishing community; that they were in the habit of laying in provision of meat, coals, butter, cheese, meal and potatoes for the winter season; that to a great extent they built their own houses, partly by their own savings and partly on borrowed money; that they were careful to educate their children, and that they never contracted marriage until they had saved up the means of beginning to keep house; that they were temperate, religious and loyal, the Witness having in his memory the zeal and enthusiasm of the people during the time of the threatened Invasion. But, that they are now so reduced, that the clubbing of all the earnings of the family on a Saturday night scarcely suffices to lay in provision for the ensuing week: that the earnings of the Weaver are from 6 *s.* to 8 *s.* a week, subject to some deductions; and that this is not a sufficiency to find him lodging, clothing, and the necessaries of life; that the houses built by the Weavers were in many instances, by the change in the currency in 1819, handed over to the mortgagees; that they make great efforts still to educate their children, but are in most cases unable; that young people marry without having the means of housekeeping, because if they waited till they had them they would never marry; that the Friendly Societies to which they were subscribers are either gone down, or have fallen into the hands of tradespeople of more means; that they have become less able to pay towards supporting religious establishments, and therefore go less to church; that they are becoming daily more and more intemperate in the use of ardent spirits; and that they have become indifferent to those feelings of loyalty which animated them heretofore. In short, that notwithstanding they work for 13 or 14 hours in the day, they are unable to obtain a sufficiency of food to support them in strength, nor of clothes to maintain them in warmth and a decent appearance.

Your

Your Committee will now refer to the Evidence of Manufacturers and Operative Weavers of England; and first, as to those of *Bolton*, a place of great importance in the Hand-loom manufacture, Your Committee find from the Evidence of Mr. *Makin*, a Manufacturer, that the Weavers are labouring under the most incredible privation, notwithstanding they are fully employed, every hand having been engaged during the last three or four years; that they do not earn a sufficiency to procure them meat, except occasionally, not more frequently than once in the week; that their ordinary food is oatmeal and potatoes; that a man, having a family of five children, cannot, with the assistance of his wife and two of his children, earn more than 2 ½ *d.* for each per day, applicable for food and clothing. And Your Committee cannot help here observing, that they found in this Evidence the proof of the necessity for actual personal observation and inspection, in order to come at the truth of the condition of the Working Classes; for that Mr. Makin, although living in the midst of these people, and himself engaged in the trade, expresses himself as one who had been incredulous as to the state of the Hand-loom Weavers until he had looked narrowly into their affairs, and as one who was startled at what he found to be the fact. Your Committee dwell upon this, because it shows, beyond a question, that the data, on which assertions of prosperity are commonly founded, are erroneous, and that actual survey and inspection are necessary in establishing the truth. Further, Your Committee found, that as to clothing, the Hand-loom Weavers of Bolton are at the lowest ebb, in detailing which, Mr. Makin says, "I cannot recollect any instance but one, where any Weaver of mine has bought a new jacket for many years, and I am only sorry I did not bring one or two jackets to let the Committee see the average state in which they are clothed;" that as to bedding they have scarcely any, and of other furniture less; that they are generally without chairs, having nothing but two or three stools to sit on, and that sometimes they have nothing but a stool, or chair, or a tea-chest. That their rents are generally in arrear, and that they are obliged to borrow of their masters to pay them; that to such courses has this destitution driven them, that they are much in the habit of embezzling the materials given out to them to weave, so much so, indeed, that the dealing in embezzled warp and weft has become a trade exceeding all calculation, there being houses for receiving and paying for the goods so embezzled; manufacturers of considerable means who deal with these receiving houses, and who manufacture and sell the goods so bought, to an extent which influences the market, causing a reduction, first, in the market price of goods, and next, in the Weavers' wages. Your Committee shocked at hearing this detail of dishonest practices, involving the character of a large part of a large community, were still more shocked at the thought that the characters of others, beyond the temptations of want, were also involved; and to show the impressions on the mind of the Witness, himself perhaps a sufferer from these practices, Your Committee cannot help stating, that when asked whether he would recommend an alteration of the Criminal Laws affecting this species of crime, his answer was, "I do; provided the Government will provide some protection to the Weaver against reductions in wages; because the immediate tendency of it would be to take from the Weaver a present source of profit, by which he ekes out his miserable pittance."

As a corollary to this, Your Committee found that the due and usual attendance at Divine Worship is generally neglected; that this arose from shame, in the first instance, at appearing at Church in rags: that the writings of Carlile and Taylor have obtained a greater spread, and that the Witness had seen companies of men applauding those who have argued against the existence of a God. But Your Committee cannot in justice close their observations on these statements without the accompanying remark, that the Witness attributes this awful

state of things to no innate vices and infidelity of the people themselves, but solely to that recklessness which originates in want and despair.

Your Committee heard Evidence confirmatory of the above from other persons of the same neighbourhood, and they refer you to that of Mr. *Needham* and Mr. *Halliwell*, the former of whom, being himself a Weaver and well acquainted with the wants, the condition, and the feelings of his class, spoke with much confidence as to the absence of attachment to the Government now prevalent among the Weavers; and he also spoke frankly to Your Committee the pervading sentiment of the Weavers, that the steam wheel is the ostensible cause of their suffering, and that, in the absence of relief of some kind from that want which at present goads them, they might seek a remedy by a violent destruction of this machine.

Your Committee also refer you to the Evidence of Mr. *Gardener*, a Manufacturer, and Mr. *Hitchen*, also a Manufacturer, in confirmation of the Evidence as to the distressed state, and the wages, of the Hand-loom Weavers of Bolton; observing upon that of Mr. *Gardener*, who stated that a Weaver could make a piece and a half of six-quarter sixty-reed cambric in a week, that Mr. *Hitchen* contradicts this fact in the plainest and best authenticated terms, and affirms positively from his own knowledge, having been a Weaver himself, that it is a very good workman who will weave 52 pieces in one year.

Your Committee will now advert to the state of the Hand-loom Weavers of *Manchester*. From this place also they heard Evidence both from Manufacturers and Weavers. By that of Mr. *Ashworth*, a Woollen Manufacturer, they found that he was well acquainted with the Weavers personally, having been deputed by a Charitable Society of Ladies and Gentlemen, to ascertain by inspection the condition of 300 or 400 families of that class, in order to facilitate the distribution of clothes and food to such as appeared the most deserving and the most in need. This Witness described their condition in a manner fully corroborative of the former Witnesses referred to by Your Committee, so much so as to make the narrative little other than a repetition of the same distressing tale; but Your Committee, nevertheless, consider it their duty to report to The House from each principal district of Hand-loom manufacturing such of the leading points of Evidence as may be best calculated to inform it. Mr. *Ashworth*, in the course of his examination, declared to Your Committee that the Weavers whom he had visited do not generally earn a sufficiency to keep them in the common necessaries of life, and that in answer to the inquiry, "What can the best-paid Weavers now earn?" the answer was the following: "I will give what I consider to be a sample of those in the best condition, and in a better condition than they are just now. I have not here any remarks upon it in writing; but I will take a man and his wife, with two children, in the Gingham-weaving, and I suppose them to be able to earn 15 *s.*: take 2*s.* 3*d.* for rent; the fire and the light to work by, taking the year round, I should think would not be less than 1 *s.* a week; that makes 3 *s.* 3*d.*; here then is 3 *s.* 3*d.* to take off the 15*s.*, that will leave 11 *s.* 9*d.*; that, divided amongst four, would be rather short of 3 *s.* a head, for meat, drink, clothing and bedding; but those very families cannot earn above 10 *s.* a week now, not having so good work. Then I come to another class, a class that has five or six children, I will take a man and his wife and six children; two of those children work in a mill, one at 1 *s.* 6*d.* a week, at least, when I had the account a few months since, and another at 2*s.* 6*d.* a week; the father cannot get above 7 *s.* a week for his weaving, that makes 11 *s.*; a lodger gives him 1 *s.*, that makes 12 *s.*; there is rent and fire to take out of this, which will at least be 3 *s.*, but I will say 2 *s.* 6*d.*; 9 *s.* remain for clothing, bedding and food for eight persons." These things the witness was well acquainted with, and spoke of from his own knowledge; further,

he

he has found, that charity debased the objects of it, and made them "cringing sycophants;" that the morals of the people were greatly influenced by their distresses, and that they have become intemperate, and neglectful of their religious duties; that their homes exhibit no appearance of comfort, being almost totally destitute of furniture, and the inmates frequently lying upon straw.

Coming from the same place, Mr. *James Brennan* stated to Your Committee that he was a Marseilles toilet cover Weaver, with a wife and two children; that he was amongst the best paid of his class, who were earning 10 *s.* the week, save an indispensable deduction of 2 *s.* 6 *d.*; and being asked how he laid out his money, he said, "I buy 1 lb. of butter at about 9 *d.*, for the week, and about 1½ lb. of sugar, to the same extent, 28 lbs. of bread at 1½ *d.*, and about 3 lbs. or 4 lbs. of potatoes a day, about 21 lbs. of potatoes a week at ¾ *d.* a lb., when I left Manchester; and about 7 lbs. of oatmeal or 7½ lbs. at 1 *s.* 2 *d.* for 10 lbs.; then the next article is milk, about 1½ *d.* worth of milk per day; then as to flesh meat, I only have it once a week, and that is on a Sunday; I generally buy ½ lb. for my wife and family, that costs 3½ *d.*, and the other days we have sometimes buttermilk and potatoes, and a bit of bacon, about ¼ lb. a day, that would be 1½ *d.*; some days we have it and some days not; it costs 10½ *d.* per week for coal, about 3 *d.* a week for candles in summer, and in winter a considerable deal more, averaging about 8 *d.* a week for candles."

This Witness, of whose industry, frugality and good repute Your Committee were convinced, stated further, that he never bought any malt liquor save two gills, or thereabout, on a Saturday night; that he had never been able to buy any furniture during his life, but was fortunate in having some left to him by his father and mother; that he could not pay his subscription to the Friendly Society, and therefore belonged to none; and that it was a struggle to pay a penny subscription for burial; that he cannot attend the Church because of his insufficiency of decent clothes; and that he knew that many Weavers who, feeling inclined to attend the Church Service, neglect to do so, from the same feelings of shame that actuated the Witness.

Mr. *John Scott*, also a practical Weaver, was selected by a Meeting of the Weavers of Manchester and Salford on account of his known industry, frugality, probity and knowledge, as a person fit to give information to Your Committee. He stated that he was one of the best paid class of Silk Weavers; that he had several looms at work; that he had a wife and three children under the age of seven years; that his wife earns 4 *s.* a week by winding at the looms; and that the joint earnings of himself and wife amounted to 8 *s.* 10 *d.* a week, clear of deductions; that to do this it required that the Witness should work from 15 to 17 hours per day; and that he frequently worked from six in the morning till 11 at night, allowing himself no more than one hour in the day for meals; that, notwithstanding this incessant labour, the Witness was not in a state to provide for his family the ordinary necessaries of life, and that the clothing of the family was necessarily also insufficient; that the Weavers do not like to appear at Church because of the insufficiency of their clothing, and that he was obliged to borrow clothes wherein to appear before Your Committee; that they have no newly-bought furniture, and that what little they bought in former times is fast wearing out, without any means to renew it; and that, notwithstanding the laborious life he led, the Witness was actually then in debt. That intemperate habits are observable among the Weavers, which is to be attributed to their desperate condition; that when bread was at 2½ *d.* a pound, and wages at 20 *s.*, the Weavers were much better off than now that bread is at 1½ *d.* a pound and wages at 7 *s.* or 8 *s.*; that when agriculture had flourished, the Weavers had done so to; and that the low price of agricultural produce has been of no comparative benefit to them.

With respect to the neighbourhood of *Huddersfield*, Your Committee examined Mr. *Richard Oastler*, of Fixby Hall, the steward to Mr. Thornhill. This Witness appeared to Your Committee to have taken great pains to make himself acquainted with the condition of the Hand-loom Weavers in his neighbourhood, and the sum of his Evidence is, that a great body of them do not earn more clear money than from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* per week; that some in the fancy work earn as much as 16*s.*, some 14*s.* and some 12*s.*; but that, from these sums, the deductions are very great for winding, loom-rent, candles, &c.; bringing down the net earnings considerably from that immediately above stated. The Witness concluded his answer to the question, "What can a fair Weaver earn in a week?" by these words:—

"I remember one particular circumstance that struck me very forcibly, for it was the very day when I read the Speech of the King to this House, in which he said the manufacturing districts were in a state of prosperity; on that very day I met with several of those Weavers who were manufacturing operatives, and I questioned them very closely, and found that, on that day, when they were said to be in such a state of prosperity, those men, and women too, were carrying burdens on their backs eight or nine miles to fetch their work, and then had to carry them back again; and they were making from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* 2*d.* a week clear wages."

And this Witness also stated to Your Committee that scores and hundreds of families do not taste flesh meat from year's end to year's end; that their food is porridge and potatoes; that their children run into Huddersfield to beg; that their clothing is scarcely to be described; and that it is "what a convict ought not to have." That the Sunday Schools are not so much attended by the children as formerly, the parents being ashamed to attend the Church owing to the state of their clothing. And the question having been put, "Have you marked a visible declension in their circumstances during those years?" the answer was,

"I have marked not only a visible declension in their circumstances, but in their spirits and in their manners altogether. I sometimes ask them, when I am walking with them, if they go to Church or Chapel? and I generally get this answer, 'We have nought to go in;' and I often ask them, 'Do you know whether you live in a Christian country or not?' and a great many do not know what I mean by the question; and sometimes they say, 'Yes, we do live in a Christian country; they tell us so.'"

It was hereon remarked, "Those are the younger class;" to which the Witness replied, "No; persons of, perhaps, 20 years old, or 19 or 20." Further, the Witness said, "In fact, I was called upon by a member of the Methodist persuasion in Huddersfield to subscribe for a mission in this district. He told me that they did not know what Christianity was. His name is Webb; he is a Manufacturer."

The Witness, moreover, expressed his firm conviction that among the class of which he spoke, there had been of late years a great falling off in that attachment to the Government which was formerly so conspicuous in this country; that, indeed, imminent was the danger to be apprehended from this source, as a people thus affected with just discontent were a ready instrument in the hands of mischievous and designing men.

Mr. *C. Milner*, of Huddersfield, stated to Your Committee that he was a Manufacturer employing Hand-loom Weavers, and that he paid them from 13*s.* to 20*s.* a week; but having put in a paper extracted from his books, Your Committee found that the average of the wages as stated therein did not amount to more than 11*s.* 4*d.*

11 *s.* 4 *d.* per week; that hereupon the Witness desired time to write home for more accurate information, and that in a short time after the Witness appeared before Your Committee again with a fuller extract from his books, then just received from Huddersfield, when it appeared that the average wages amounted to 11 *s.* per week, ranging from 7 *s.* 8½ *d.* to 14 *s.* 8 *d.*; that this is a statement of the gross earnings, is given for the work that is best paid for, and is subject to deductions of various kinds, as stated above in the Evidence of Mr. Oastler. And this Witness stated to Your Committee that there was another description of manufacture carried on in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield at which a much greater number of hands were employed, the wages for which were considerably lower; but he had no statement to give to Your Committee, and could not say what those Weavers earned.

From *Leeds*, Your Committee received the Evidence of Mr. *Brook*, a Cloth-dresser, who confirmed the accounts given by Witnesses from other places as to the main points to which the attention of Your Committee was directed; namely, that the Hand-loom Weavers of Leeds are worse off than they were 14 or 15 years back; that they do not earn a sufficiency to keep them in proper necessaries; that their clothing and furniture is very much worse; that, instead of applying even their reduced wages to the support of their families, indulgence in dram-drinking, as a temporary relief from despair, is much on the increase; and that, from the want of clothes to attend the Church in, and of means for educating their children, they neglect these important moral duties. Moreover, a Statement of the Earnings of a certain number of the Hand-loom Weavers of Leeds was put in by *Edward Baines*, Esq., M.P., a Member of Your Committee, which will be found below.

Referring now to *Ireland*, Your Committee will first speak of the Evidence which they received from the Weavers of *Belfast*. Mr. *John Boyd*, a Weaver, stated to them that there are three classes of Weavers in the town and neighbourhood; that the least numerous class obtain in wages an income of 6 *s.* to 6 *s.* 6 *d.*, and that they work from 14 to 16 or 18 hours a day, inclusive of, perhaps, an hour and a half for meals; that the second class, more numerous, earn 5 *s.* to 5 *s.* 6 *d.* a week, working the same hours; that the third class, who are less able or less dexterous, and work on coarser material, earn from 3 *s.* 6 *d.* to 4 *s.* 6 *d.* a week; and, on being questioned as to the mode of living, the Witness supposed a man, with a wife and two children, and gave in to Your Committee the following scale of outgoings for the week:

	s.	*d.*
10 stone of coals at 1½ *d.* per stone - -	1	3
Loom-rent - - - - - -	1	–
[This statement does not include rent of the house; it is only rent on cost for the wear and tear.]		
¾ stone of oatmeal - - - - -	1	3
1 lb. of candles for shop - - - -	–	6
1 lb. candles for house - - - -	–	3
3 stone of potatoes - - - - -	–	7½
Sour milk, eight quarts - - - -	–	4
Eight herrings - - - - -	–	4
½ oz. tea and ½ lb. sugar - - - -	–	7½
Bread - - - - - -	–	4
½ lb. soap - - - - - -	–	2½
	6	6½

That as to the third class, some of them have potatoe-ground in the country, which aids them in procuring food; but that the whole body are unable to procure by their earnings a sufficiency of necessary food; that they are extremely ill clad; that, on that account, many refrain from attending Divine Worship, and that the Witness has observed, for some time, a marked falling off in the looms, from the inability of the Weavers to repair or renew them. The Evidence of this Witness was confirmed before Your Committee by that of Mr. *Moncrief*, a Manufacturer coming from the same place.

As confirming the statement from Belfast, Your Committee will further state, that two Witnesses were sent to give Evidence, from *Drogheda*, being chosen at a meeting called by the Mayor. Mr. *J. Chadwick*, a Dealer in Linen, was first examined, and bore testimony to the wretched condition of the Hand-loom Weavers of the neighbourhood from which he came, stating that their earnings were not sufficient to find them in the necessaries of life; that in 1812 the wages for weaving a piece of 78 yards was 15 *s.*; that in 1816 it was 16 *s.*; that in 1820 five yards were added to the length of the piece, and the price for weaving reduced to 10 *s.*; that in 1828 the length of the piece was again increased to 88 yards, and the price for weaving reduced to 7 *s.* 6 *d.*; that in 1834 the length of the piece was increased to 93 yards, and the price for weaving reduced to 7 *s.* And Your Committee think it right to observe here, that this principle has been adopted often, namely, increasing the length or breadth of the cloth concurrently with reductions in the price for weaving, a fact material to consider when it is recollected that the piece is so constantly referred to as a definite measure.

Mr. *Patrick M'Gray*, a Hand-loom Weaver of Drogheda, confirmed the statement given to Your Committee by Mr. *Chadwick*. He stated that the earnings of a Weaver are not more than 3 *s.* to 3 *s.* 6 *d.* per week; that they generally live upon potatoes and salt, and that only; that they are compelled to send their wives and families out to beg every day in the week; and that the majority of the Weavers at Drogheda think that it is impossible they can be worse off unless their lives be taken.

From *Spitalfields* Your Committee took the Evidence of Mr. *Ballance*, a respectable Manufacturer, who stated that the Weaver could earn at the time he spoke from 7 *s.* 6 *d.* to 8 *s.* per week, clear of deductions; but that, to do this, he was compelled to work 14 hours a day; that this labour is excessive, and is incompatible with the Weaver's health; that up to 1826, he could earn 14 *s.* or 16 *s.* a week, and was not then overpaid; that 20 *s.* per week would be sufficient pay; that it is impossible for them to support themselves at their present earnings; that their distresses are truly appalling, there being now many men who used to support their families with credit, who are mere paupers.

Mr. *John Duce*, a Weaver of Spitalfields, confirmed the above fully, and stated that the hours of labour were now frequently 16 hours a day; his answer to the question "Do many of the Spitalfields Weavers work 16 hours a day?" being the following: "Yes, often; and on the Sunday, if you will walk there, you will hear the looms going."

Mr. *William Hale*, many years a Manufacturer in Spitalfields, stated to Your Committee, that before the repeal of the Spitalfields Act, the Weavers were comparatively well off, and that they always declined to interfere in political struggles, though often invited to do so; that their invariable answer was, "We are fairly paid for our labour, we are protected by Government, and do not wish to mix in the turmoil of societies of a political nature." Since that Act was repealed their condition has become deplorable; that they are without clothing, bedding, furni-

ture,

ture, or a sufficiency of the common necessaries of life. The Witness observed to Your Committee, that, if the Operative Manufacturers were properly paid for their labour, it would be greatly beneficial to Agriculture, by making them greater consumers of agricultural produce; and further, that a Repeal of the Corn Laws would be the ruin of the Manufacturer, inasmuch as it would necessarily ruin the shopkeepers who depend on the farmers, and whose ruin would involve that of the Manufacturer and his dependents. And Your Committee feel themselves bound to observe, that many of the Witnesses examined by them, especially Operative Weavers, have concurred in the opinion thus elaborately stated by Mr. *Hale* on the necessity for the maintenance of British Agriculture.

Mr. *William Wallis*, a Weaver, from the same place, stated to Your Committee, that the great fall in wages has come upon them since the repeal of the Spitalfields Act; that the Weaver is now brought to live upon less and coarser food than formerly; that he works 16 hours every day in the week to earn what is insufficient to purchase the common necessaries of life, and that he has nothing wherewith he can make good the wear and tear of clothing, household goods, and utensils of trade.

Your Committee find, from the best computations they have been referred to by the Witnesses, that the number of Hand-loom Weavers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and those dependent on their earnings for support, is 840,000; and that, as a general summary of the Evidence, and confirmation of the above, they cannot more truly depict the condition of the Hand-loom Weavers than by giving what was stated to Your Committee, in Evidence, by *John Fielden*, Esq., M.P., a Member of Your Committee; namely,

"That a very great number of the Weavers are unable to provide for themselves and their families a sufficiency of food of the plainest and cheapest kind; that they are clothed in rags, and indisposed on this account to go to any place of worship, or to send their children to the Sunday Schools; that they have scarcely anything like furniture in their houses; that their beds and bedding are of the most wretched description, and that many of them sleep upon straw; that notwithstanding their want of food, clothing, furniture and bedding, they, for the most part, have full employment; that their labour is excessive, not unfrequently 16 hours a day; that this state of destitution and excessive labour induces them to drink ardent spirits to revive their drooping powers and allay their sorrows, whereby their suffering is increased; that their poverty and wretchedness cause many to embezzle and sell the materials entrusted to them to be worked up; and that to such an extent has this now gone, that there are now notoriously receiving-houses at which the weavers can exchange such embezzled materials for spirits, victuals and money; and that there are manufacturers who buy of these receivers the principal part of the weft which they manufacture, thus destroying the morals of the weavers, the tradespeople with whom they deal, and even of the manufacturers themselves; that this, it is said, requires a stronger legal remedy than that now in force to check it. Yet the intelligent Manufacturer, Mr. Makin of Bolton, who suggested an amendment of the law, overpowered by his feelings, stated distinctly that he could not recommend such amendment of the law, unless it was accompanied by some measure that would secure better wages to the Weaver for his labour. That, being placed in these deplorable circumstances, they dreaded the operation of the Poor Law Amendment Bill. The Evidence of Phillip Hallowell, of Bolton, on this point is deserving of the most serious consideration. That although there is a great difference in the wages paid by different manufacturers for the same sort of work, (in some cases 50 per cent.,) a grievance of which the Witnesses complain and desire a remedy for, and although the Masters paying the better wages are sometimes disposed to increase the number of their Weavers, yet the poverty of many Weavers compels them to

work for the Masters who pay the lower wages, being tied to them from being in their debt for money lent, which it was agreed should be repaid to them by a small stoppage out of the Weaver's wages every time he delivered in any finished work; which stoppage out of wages the Weaver's poverty often induces him to entreat his Master to postpone. The tie is thus prolonged, fresh loans are made before the previous ones are repaid, and the hold the low-paying Master has on his Weaver is thus continued. Another difficulty the Weaver has in changing his employer is, that he is too poor to defray the expense of new gears and implements, such as the change requires, and to lose the time he necessarily must do in changing his employer and his work. The case of these Weavers, therefore, appears to be hopeless, unless some Measure of relief be enacted by the Legislature. Many Witnesses gave it as their decided conviction that the poverty of the Weavers had been the fruitful cause of Trades' Unions amongst other artizans, who, seeing the extreme destitution the Weavers were reduced to by successive reductions of wages, united for their mutual protection, to avoid falling into the same wretched condition."

This state of distress and suffering amongst the Weavers applies to large classes employed in weaving woollen, linen, silk and cotton, and it is especially deserving of remark that this distress is as severely felt by many who weave fine goods, such as muslins and various fancy and figured articles entirely wove upon Hand-looms, as it is felt by those employed in weaving fabrics which come into immediate competition with the cloth wove upon Power-looms.

It appears that the wages of the Hand-loom Weavers have been reduced generally since 1815, to one-half or one-third of the wages paid at that period, and that the sums reduced were largest in 1816, 1817, 1826 and 1829.

The weekly wages a fair average Weaver can now earn at the work a majority of the Weavers are employed on, is stated in Evidence by Weavers, Manufacturers and other Witnesses to be as follows:

At Aberdeen, 3 *s.* 6 *d.* to 5 *s.* 6 *d.* net.
Bolton, 4 *s.* 1 ½ *d.* net.
Dundee, 6 *s.* to 7 *s.* net.
Forfar, 6 *s.* net.
Glasgow, 4 *s.* to 8 *s.* gross.
Huddersfield, 4 *s.* 6 *d.* to 5 *s.*; a few 16 *s.*
Lanark, 5 *s.* 1 *d.* net.
Manchester, 5 *s.* to 7 *s.* 6 *d.* net.
At Paisley, 6 *s.* to 7 *s.* gross.
Perth, 4 *s.* 9 *d.* to 7 *s.* 9 *d.* net.
Preston, 4 *s.* 9 *d.* to 6 *s.* 6 *d.* gross.
Spitalfields, 7 *s.* 6 *d.* to 8 *s.* gross.
Stockport, 9 *s.* gross.
Coventry, 7 *s.* 6 *d.* net.
Nuneaton, 4 *s.* 8 *d.* net.
Drogheda, 2 *s.* 4 *d.* to 4 *s.* net.
Belfast, 3 *s.* 6 *d.* to 6 *s.* 6 *d.* gross.

Mr. *Ashworth* put in a Statement of an actual survey, which showed the earnings of 348 Weavers in only ten streets of Manchester, weaving 24 sorts of silk and cotton goods, to average 4 *s.* 9 *d.* gross wages for each individual, out of which 775 persons had to be supported with food, raiment and shelter. (*See* Evidence, p. 607, of Minutes of Evidence.) Mr. *Needham*, too, put in a Statement of the earnings of a family of seven persons, the husband, the wife, and two of the children being weavers, whose united earnings amounted to 18 *s.* in the week, who must be in good health to perform the work; and he stated the deductions to be 7 *s.* 2 *d.*, leaving clear 10 *s.* 10 *d.* to purchase food, clothing, and other necessaries for the seven persons, or about 2 ½ *d.* a day. (*See* Minutes of Evidence, p. 441.)

A Table, showing the earnings of 657 Weavers of different classes at Leeds, was given in to Your Committee by *Edward Baines*, Esq., M.P., and a Member

Member of Your Committee, by which it appears that they are, for the first class:

Men, 11 *s.* 3 *d.*; Women, 5 *s.* 9 *d.*; Boys, 7 *s.* 3 *d.*; Girls, 5 *s.* 9 *d.*;

but that these have employment during 10 months in the year only.

For the second class:

Men, 8 *s.* 6 *d.*; Women, 5 *s.*; Boys, 5 *s.*;

but that these are employed during six months in the year only. And upon this Your Committee cannot help observing, that, notwithstanding this partial employment, these Weavers are better paid than those who are in full employ in other places; that they receive as much money during the year, although employed at this work only half of the year, as the Weavers at Bolton receive, who are employed in weaving the whole of the year, thus showing that better wages and partial employment is better for the Weavers than full employment for half of the same wages, a fact confirmed by almost every Manufacturer; who also moreover stated, that good wages and partial employment, when full employment could not be obtained, was also more conducive to their interest.

Your Committee cannot close this part of their Report without exposing the error of the common assertion, "that, though the wages of the Weaver are low in money, still he is not so ill-off as is represented, owing to the reduction that has taken place in the price of the necessaries of life." For this purpose, Your Committee take the result of a Table put in by Mr. *Needham*, (p. 432 of the Minutes), in which the price of weaving and the prices of four principal articles of food are given, during five periods of seven successive years each, and one of two, comprising the time between the year 1797 and 1834.

From 1797 to 1804 a Weaver could earn 26 *s.* 8 *d.* per week, which would buy him 100 lbs. of flour, or 142 lbs. of oatmeal, or 826 lbs. of potatoes, or 55 lbs. of butchers' meat; which would give a general average of a relative proportion of these articles of 281 lbs.

From 1804 to 1811, wages 20 *s.*; general average of food, 238 lbs.
From 1811 to 1818, wages 14 *s.* 7 *d.*; general average of food, 131 lbs.
From 1818 to 1825, wages 8 *s.* 9 *d.*; general average of food, 108 lbs.
From 1825 to 1832, wages 6 *s.* 4 *d.*; general average of food, 83 lbs.
From 1832 to 1834, wages 5 *s.* 6 *d.*; general average of food, 83 lbs.

This diminution in the command of food is not the only ground of the Weaver's complaint; there is also his rent; and a short statement will suffice to show the number of pieces that he has at different times been obliged to weave in order to pay it: Your Committee, unable to arrive at a certainty as to all his outgoings, will take this important one by way of illustration:

In the first seven years the wages for weaving six pieces would pay his rent; in the second seven years it required him to weave nine pieces; in the third seven years, twelve and a third pieces; in the fourth seven years, sixteen pieces; in the fifth seven years, twenty-two pieces; in the two last years, twenty-five pieces.

The necessaries of life are undoubtedly lower now than in 1815, yet the Weavers' wages have fallen much more in proportion, the former being reduced only about 30 per cent., while their wages have declined 60 per cent.; hence the labour of the Weavers has lost its proportionate value to other things;

from which it is apparent there is an excess of supply or an inadequate consumption of the articles the Weavers produce.

Moreover, it would appear that even these wages, so inordinately reduced, cannot be earned without excessive hours of toil, and that by the produce of these excessive hours of work, viz., from 14 to 17 hours daily, a stock of goods is created not only exceeding the legitimate demand, but glutting the market with an excessive supply of cloth, by which both the employers and the employed are additionally injured; because the superabundance of goods, which their necessities compel them to produce, diminishes the need for their services, and depreciates their labour.

With respect to the remedies for this now acknowledged distress, although the petitions for the most part, have, in the first instance, prayed for a Central Board or Local Boards of Trade, or both, nevertheless, in consequence of a Bill having been submitted to Your Committee by an Honourable Member of it (himself, by means of the Power and Hand-loom, one of the most extensive manufacturers of the empire), which seemed to effect the object of the petitioners in a less complex manner than the one suggested by themselves; and this Bill having subsequently met with the general concurrence of the petitioners, (upwards of 100,000 persons, clergymen, magistrates, manufacturers and weavers having already prayed for it, Your Committee have deemed it their duty to call up Evidence in the present Session, mainly to testify to the practicability or impracticability, the policy or impolicy, of this measure. Moreover, the Witnesses summoned before the Committee of last Session, having been for the most part favourable to Legislative interference, it was thought expedient, on the present occasion, to summon Witnesses adverse to the principle, in order that the fullest information might be obtained concerning their objections. In the selection, therefore, of Witnesses from each place, the Chairman was empowered to request the chief municipal officer of such place to call a public meeting of Manufacturers employing Hand-loom Weavers (and Weavers also, if the Evidence of Weavers was required by the Committee), which should have the power of electing the Witnesses considered by them the best entitled to give Evidence before Your Committee, an instruction having been added to such communication, that a Witness adverse to the principle of the measure in question would be most acceptable to the Committee. Amongst the practical men, with the exception of two or three (especially Mr. *Gardner*, of Manchester, and Mr. *James Jenkins*, of Coventry), the whole of these Witnesses were favourable, in consideration of the urgency of the case, to Mr. Fielden's Bill being tried as an experiment; and even the two gentlemen just mentioned, although objecting to the principle, acknowledged the practicability of the plan.

The principal feature of Mr. Fielden's Bill, is, that returns shall be made every three or six months of the prices of weaving paid by the smallest number of manufacturers, who collectively make one-half of the goods of any description in the parish or township whence the returns are sent, and the average of the highest prices paid by a majority of such manufacturers, shall be the lowest price to be paid in such parish or township during the succeeding three or six months. The effect of the measure would be to withdraw from the worst-paying masters the power which they now possess of regulating wages, and to confer it upon those whose object it is to raise the condition and character of the workpeople. It would merely sanction, by Parliamentary enactment, tables of prices, or a mode of regulation already attempted by the masters themselves (as the Evidence abundantly shows), but which has as often failed only for want of Legislative authority to control those masters whose practice it is to depress the rate of wages.

Your

Your Committee beg respectfully to declare their opinion, that the distresses of the Petitioners warrant the trial of a measure of this limited nature, and that, if it do not succeed to the extent of the expectation of the Petitioners, it will at least show that Parliament has sympathised in their distress, and lent a willing ear to their prayers for relief.

To the sentiment that Parliament cannot and ought not to interfere in cases of this nature, Your Committee is decidedly opposed. On the contrary, where the comfort and happiness of any considerable number of British subjects is at stake, Your Committee conceive that Parliament ought not to delay a moment to inquire, and, if possible, to institute redress.

Your Committee, therefore, recommend that a Bill of the nature of the one proposed by Mr. Fielden should be immediately introduced into Parliament.

Having now gone through a cursory digest of the case of the Hand-loom Weavers, as it was submitted to them in Evidence, and expressed their sentiment on the remedy to which their attention was called, Your Committee venture to lay before The House their opinion as to the general causes of this lamentable state of things.

Of the combination of causes to which the reduction of wages and consequent distress of the Weavers may be attributed, the following appear to be the most prominent:

1st. Increase of machinery propelled by steam.

2d. Heavy and oppressive taxation, occasioned by the war.

3d. Increased pressure thereof, from operations on the currency, and contractions of the circulating medium in 1816, 1826 and 1829.

4th. The exportation of British yarn, and foreign competition created thereby, from the increase of rival manufactures abroad.

5th. The impulse given, by low wages and low profits, to longer hours of work.

On these causes, Your Committee beg to submit the following observations:

With respect to the first, viz. "Increase of machinery propelled by steam." It would appear from the Evidence, that although the Power-loom has been now for some years past in operation, yet that it has but very lately, in comparison, been brought into direct competition with the Hand-loom; that at this moment, even, there are branches of the Hand-loom business in which there is no immediate prospect of the Power-loom interfering with them, but which are, notwithstanding, more or less in the same state of wretchedness and destitution described in the foregoing pages; while the general fall in wages, and consequent distress of the Hand-loom Weavers, has been rapidly progressive ever since the termination of the late war; and especially marked at the stated periods of 1816, 1826 and 1829.

This decline in the circumstances of the Weavers, Your Committee cannot attribute to the mere transition from a state of war to that of peace, which is supposed by some to have destroyed a monopoly possessed by this country in the foreign market during the war, because the quantity of British produce and manufactures exported, measured by the official value, has been exactly doubled since the war. Your Committee have, therefore, turned their attention to other probable causes which may have affected the Weaver's condition. And in comparing his condition with that of other producers in other branches of industry, they find, whether in the produce of the land or of the Power-loom, or of articles

affected neither by seasons or machinery, a tremendous fall has taken place since 1814. Neither can Your Committee attribute this fall in the value of every commodity to such assigned transition from war to peace; because, in addition to the reason before stated, in all the wars of the last century, save one, prices fell during war, and rose on the return of peace.

Looking, on the other hand, to the constant coincidence during the late war, of a rise in all prices, simultaneously, with an increase of the Bank of England and country note circulation; and looking also to the fall in all prices concurrently with the preparation for payment, by the Bank of England, of its notes in gold on the return of peace; looking moreover to the rise in all prices at the two distinct intervals of 1817, 1818 and 1823, 1824 and 1825, when the resumption of cash payments was either deferred or modified, and the Bank of England was again induced to increase its circulation; and looking, lastly, to the fall in all prices, when these issues of the Bank of England were again withdrawn in 1819 and 1826; and to the extinction of one pound notes in 1829: looking at all these circumstances in conjunction, Your Committee cannot withhold their conviction that the Bill of 1819, commonly called Mr. Peel's Bill, (the preparation for, and completion of, which has just been described,) has been the main cause of the great pressure on industry resulting from the fall in prices.

That some branches of industry have been better able to withstand this pressure than others, appears to Your Committee undeniable; especially in cases where they have been assisted by external circumstances. For instance, that part of the export trade which consists of yarn, the produce altogether of machinery propelled by power, has been stimulated by the increased demand for yarn for foreign Weavers. The home trade depending, for the most part, or entirely, for its support on the well-being of the agricultural interest, and that interest having suffered to such an extent from the fall in the prices of its produce; the result, from this adversity in the home trade, has been to double any disadvantage which might have befallen the Hand-loom Weaver from the introduction of the Power-loom. His condition has been as if half his market were taken away from him at the very moment that twice the number of Weavers (in the shape of the Power-loom,) were brought to contend against each other for work.

Your Committee are not in the least disposed to deny the influence the Power-loom has had upon the condition of the Hand-loom Weaver; but they cannot help lamenting that such should have been the course of our legislation, that instead of breaking the force of this (at its commencement) almost necessary evil on the Hand-loom Weaver; and instead of causing it to be as gradual as possible, it has actually gone out of its way to quicken its progress, and to aggravate, to an inconceivable extent, the burden and the pressure of it. As an instance of this, the distress and disemployment of agricultural and other labourers, in consequence of the fall in prices resulting from Mr. Peel's Bill, has prevented the possibility of the absorption of the Weavers in agriculture and other pursuits, as they gradually might become supernumerary. This would have been the natural process; it is the mode of relief suggested by Dr. *Adam Smith* in such an emergency; but Parliament has effectually interfered to prevent their taking advantage of it; thus giving the Weavers an unexceptionable plea for demanding Parliamentary protection, if it be to be found, at the present moment.

In all changes, such as have been described, the most ingenious and the most dexterous will of course suffer the least. Machinery propelled by steam, producing goods at less trouble and cost than even the most ingenious artisan, may thus be looked upon in the light of the most dexterous workman, and of course has experienced in proportion a smaller share of difficulty, especially under the circumstance of less taxation falling upon it. Again, all the gradations of operatives

ratives and laboourers have suffered more or less in proportion to their skill, strength, and ability: in struggles of this kind the weakest will go to the wall: and this is equally true whether applied to land or manufactures. The poor soil (as respects the cost of production) may be termed the less dexterous manufacturer of corn, as the Hand-loom Weaver, in the same sense, is the less expert manufacturer of goods.

In addition to the Hand-loom Weavers being the weakest party in the contest going on, they have had (what they consider) a disadvantage of another kind, compared with some, viz., living and working in their own houses, being spread over large districts of country, and detached from their brethren working in the same line; this has thrown difficulties in the way of those combinations to prevent the reduction of wages, which of late years have so frequently taken place among operatives employed in masses in factories and in other trades. In stating this, Your Committee would be understood to be far from expressing any approbation of such systems of combination; because whatever is extracted unduly out of the capital of the employer in the shape of wages, must eventually re-act on the condition of the employed. It was also stated by several witnesses, that the fear of being finally reduced to the destitute condition of the Hand-loom Weavers, had induced other trades to combine to prevent it.

Concluding their observations on the subject of the Power-loom, Your Committee beg, again, to be distinctly understood that nothing can be further from their opinion than that the Hand-loom Weaver, in certain branches of the trade, can ultimately resist the effects produced by the introduction of the Power-loom. All they have contended for, and that is supported by the Evidence before them, is that the Power-loom of itself would never have been the cause of such immediate wide-spread misery and distress as that of which the Hand-loom Weavers now so reasonably complain. They repeat the opinion, that other causes, wholly apart and distinct from the Power-loom, have tended to aggravate their difficulties; and that if they had had to contend with the Power-loom alone, the difficulties, although they might have been sufficiently apparent, would have been greatly mitigated.

With respect to the second cause operating on the condition of the Weaver, viz. "Heavy and oppressive taxation occasioned by the war," no comment appears to be necessary.

With respect to the third cause, viz. "Increased pressure thereof, from operations on the currency, and contractions of the circulating medium in 1816, 1826 and 1829;" it may be useful to show the feelings of the Weavers themselves on the subject, as exhibited before Your Committee in an answer by *Hugh Mackenzie*, a most intelligent Weaver, from Glasgow:

"985. Do you ascribe your distress to what is called the Corn Bill?—With respect to the Corn Bill, there are many different opinions upon it; but as relates to us as Weavers, we are persuaded, that though the Corn Bill were off to-morrow, such is the nature of our manufactures and the disposition for cheapness, that they would reduce us just exactly proportionably to the fall of corn.

"986. Do you suppose that what is called Peel's Bill, has been instrumental in affecting either your employment or your wages; do you know what is called Peel's Bill for reducing the quantity of money?—Yes, I have heard tell of Peel's Bill; what I understand by it is this, that it has been a means of contracting the currency. Now, under such circumstances as that, there is nothing more clear than that it must be a general evil to the country. I shall illustrate this to you just now. The higher the circulation of money in this country is, so much the better; for we stand on artificial ground in comparison with that of the rest of the surrounding nations of Europe. This becomes necessary on account of the very great burthen of the National Debt. If the country has an artificial burthen to

bear, it becomes absolutely necessary that it should have artificial means of support. If the circulation of the country, (that is, the value of labour,) be 200,000,000 *l.* yearly, and the taxation 50,000,000 *l.*, it is clear then that there is one-fourth of it taxation, paid out of this 200,000,000 *l.* We shall suppose then, by Peel's Bill, or any other measure, the currency is restricted to 100,000,000 *l.*, being still the yearly value of labour. If we pay still 50,000,000 *l.* of taxation, it makes the burthen double; and I might add, that if the income of all other classes, productive and unproductive, were reduced proportionably as the Weavers are, it would be impossible to pay the taxation; and a national bankruptcy would be the consequence."

With respect to the fourth cause, viz. "The exportation of British yarn, and foreign competition created thereby from the increase of rival manufactures abroad," Your Committee cannot but lament that any temporary pressure in the manufacturing interest, subsequent to 1815, should have led to so great an increase in the export of yarn; because, however individually profitable in the first instance, nothing can be more certain than that by encouraging weaving abroad, we allow the foreigner to get between the British manufacturer and the market, and so to cut off a lasting source of profitable employment to our fellow countrymen. That this encouragement to foreign weaving by the export of yarn has added to the disadvantageous circumstances operating on the condition of the Hand-loom Weaver, Your Committee see little reason to doubt.

With respect to the fifth cause, viz. "The impulse given, by low wages and low profits, to longer hours of work." These longer hours of work, as appears from the Evidence, proceed from a hope in the minds both of masters and men, that increased exertion will compensate for the fall in profits and wages: but the result of this system is, that goods are produced more than commensurate with the demand; and the ultimate effect, consequently, is an injurious reaction on those engaged in it; and it has become, in fact, the fruitful source of that "ruinous home competition" which the Weavers make one of the principal grounds of their complaint.

These appear to Your Committee to be the efficient causes, remote and immediate, of the suffering, demoralization, and discontent of the Hand-loom Weavers.

To the above enumeration of causes, Your Committee beg to add the subjoined suggestions from one of the Witnesses, Mr. *James Jenkins*, many of which appear to be valuable.

"I beg leave to add the following suggestions on the advantages to be derived from the establishment of local boards of trade in Coventry:—

"It could decide differences between masters and workmen, and between masters and apprentices.

"It might put into operation the livret system of France, which would enable workmen leaving their homes for want of employment to obtain it in places where they were unknown, and by which the losses of manufacturers by embezzlements would be diminished.

"It could establish a school of art, the principal thing wanted to put the English ribbon manufacturer on a level with the French.

"It would stimulate mechanical invention and skill by distributing rewards and honours.

"It could facilitate the introduction of the best machinery used in other places, and improved modes of manufacture.

"It could collect statistical information and prevent the continual necessity of Parliamentary inquiries.

"It

"It would be instrumental in introducing new branches of industry to take up the surplus labour of a place.

"It would enable workmen to obtain the full market price for their labour, and, when the state of the demand justified it, would facilitate their obtaining advances in wages.

"It could counteract the present practice of weavers bringing up their children to branches of trade already overstocked with workmen, and assist their introduction into other trades where labour was wanting."

Dr. Bowring also furnished Your Committee with very valuable information respecting industrial institutions in France (similar in their nature and objects to the above), of which he has had much recent experience, and for which information Your Committee beg leave to refer to the Evidence.

Your Committee would also add the following suggestions from the Evidence, as worthy of adoption:

1st. A more exact specification of the length and breadth of the pieces of goods to be manufactured:

2d. A cheaper legal form of indenture of apprentices, and a reduction of the stamp duty to *5s*:

And 3d. A more summary and effectual protection against embezzlement of weaving materials.

Your Committee cannot close their Report without pointing out to Your Honourable House the very great disadvantages to which the Hand-loom Weaver is exposed by reason of such taxes as those on malt, hops, sugar and soap, which, by raising the price of articles of first necessity, renders him either less able to consume the productions of Great Britain and her Colonies, or cause him to be a more costly instrument of production than he would otherwise be to the Manufacturer; who has thus an additional inducement to substitute mechanical for manual labour.

1 *July* 1835.

REPORT of the Select Committee on HAND-LOOM WEAVERS, Sess. 1834.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to examine the PETITIONS presented to this House, from the HAND-LOOM WEAVERS, and to report their Observations thereupon to The House, and who were empowered to report the MINUTES of the EVIDENCE taken before them to The House:—HAVE examined the Matters referred to them, and agreed to the following REPORT:

YOUR COMMITTEE have, as far as the late period of the Session at which they were appointed would admit, made inquiry into the facts and allegations contained in the Petitions of the Hand-loom Weavers, referred to their consideration; and they feel deep regret at finding the sufferings of that large and valuable body of men, not only not exaggerated, but that they have for years continued to an extent and intensity scarcely to be credited or conceived, and have been borne with a degree of patience unexampled.

This distress is attributed by the Witnesses to various causes, and among others to the extensive use of Machinery,—to heavy and oppressive Taxation,—to the present system of Corn Laws; but more especially to the great competition amongst Manufacturers, which, it is stated, has had the effect of producing the present deplorable condition of the Hand-loom Weavers, comprising, as it appears from the Evidence, a body of not less than eight hundred thousand individuals, dependant on this occupation for subsistence.

Several remedies have been suggested, most of them upon the principle that a minimum of wages ought to be established.

The plan proposed by some of the Witnesses is, that a *Central Board* of Trade should be established for the purpose of regulating Wages, and that the same price should be paid for weaving the same article in every part of the United Kingdom. Others recommend *Local Boards* of Trade, composed of an equal number of Masters and Workmen; these Boards to have the power of regulating Wages from time to time, according to circumstances, by fixing the minimum in their respective districts, so as to prevent individual Masters from lowering Wages unnecessarily and at pleasure.

A third plan has been proposed by a Member of the Committee and given in evidence; a leading feature of which is, that Returns shall be made of the Prices of Weaving paid by such a number of Manufacturers as collectively make one-half of the goods of any description in the parish or township from whence the Returns are sent, and the average of the highest prices paid by a majority of such Manufacturers, shall be the lowest price to be paid in such parish or township during the succeeding three months.

For a more detailed account of these several modes, and others which have been suggested, for remedying the evils complained of, Your Committee beg leave to refer to the Evidence. As to the practicability and efficiency of any of the above plans, Your Committee do not feel warranted in giving any decided opinion; but they are impressed with a serious conviction, that some Legislative Enactment is imperatively necessary for the removal of existing evils, which are alike injurious to the Master and the Operative.

But being unable to pursue their inquiries further into this important subject at present, they now lay the Evidence taken by them before The House, and recommend a renewal of the investigation early in the ensuing Session of Parliament.

4 *August* 1834.

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Jovis, 12° *die Martii*, 1835.

JOHN MAXWELL, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

John Fielden, Esq. (a Member of the Committee) Examined.

1. CAN you state to the Committee what you believe, after considering the evidence given before the Committee on Hand-loom Weavers last year, was the substance of that evidence?—I am prepared to state what that evidence establishes from the mouths of the witnesses upon my own mind, from my own knowledge of that branch of business, which I consider clearly proved as to the present state of the hand-loom weavers; the cause of the depression of which they complain, and the remedy which has been suggested to the consideration of the Committee. If it meets with the wishes of honourable Members, I should prefer reading what I have written upon the subject, to stating it simply. I would wish first to observe, that if the Report of the Committee of last Session has not been read by all the Members present, it should be read by them before the evidence I am about to give.

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[*The Report of the Committee of last Session was read, and the honourable Member then proceeded as follows:*]

In illustration of this Report, it will be seen, on reference to the evidence, that a very great number of these weavers are unable to provide for themselves and their families a sufficiency of food of the plainest and cheapest kind; that they are clothed in rags, and indisposed on this account to go to any place of worship, or to send their children to the Sunday schools; that they have scarcely anything like furniture in their houses; that their beds and bedding are of the most wretched description, and that many of them sleep upon straw; that notwithstanding their want of food, clothing, furniture and bedding, they for the most part have full em ployment; that their labour is excessive, not unfrequently sixteen hours a day; that this state of destitution and excessive labour induces them to drink ardent spirits to revive their drooping spirits and allay their sorrows, whereby their suffering is increased; that their poverty and wretchedness cause many to embezzle, and sell the materials entrusted to them to be worked up, and that to such an extent has this now gone, that there are now notoriously receiving-houses at which the weavers can exchange such embezzled materials for spirits, victuals and money, and that there are manufacturers who buy of these receivers the principal part of the weft which they manufacture, thus destroying the morals of the weavers, the tradespeople with whom they deal, and even of the manufacturers themselves; that this, it is said, requires a stronger legal remedy than that now in force to check it. Yet the intelligent manufacturer, Mr. Makin of Bolton, who suggested an amendment of the law, overpowered by his feelings, stated distinctly that he could not recommend such amendment of the law, unless it was accompanied by some measure that would secure better wages to the weaver for his labour. That being placed in these deplorable circumstances, they dreaded the operation that would be consequent on the Poor Law Amendment Bill then going through the House.

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The evidence of Philip Halliwell of Bolton, on this point, is deserving of the most serious consideration. That although there is a great difference in the wages paid by different masters for the same sort of work, in some cases 50 per cent., a grievance of which the witnesses complain and desire a remedy for, and although the masters paying the better wages are sometimes disposed to increase the number of their weavers, yet the poverty of many weavers compels them to work for the masters who pay the lower wages, being tied to them from being in their debt for money lent, which it was agreed should be repaid to them by a small stoppage out of the weaver's wages every time he delivered in any finished work, which stoppage out of wages the weaver's poverty often induces him to intreat his master to postpone. The tie is thus prolonged, fresh loans are made before the previous ones are repaid, and the hold the low-paying master has on his weaver is thus continued. Another difficulty the weaver has in changing his employer is, that he is too poor to defray the expense of new gears and implements, such as the change requires, and to lose the time that he necessarily must do in changing his employer and his work. The case of these weavers therefore appears to be hopeless, unless some measure of relief be enacted by the Legislature. Many of the witnesses gave it as their decided conviction that the poverty of the weavers had been the fruitful cause of the establishment of trades' unions amongst other artisans, who, seeing the extreme destitution the weavers were reduced to by successive reductions of wages, united for their mutual protection to avoid falling into the same wretched condition. That is the state of the weavers as detailed in the evidence, and which I have abstracted from it in as short a way as I could to comprise the most leading points; and now I will go to what is stated to be the cause, and I wish to state that I go to the immediate cause, which is the reduction of wages. As to any remote cause, I do not wish to give any opinion at present before the Committee. I entirely concur in everything I am about to state, and if honourable Members will take the trouble to read the evidence, they will find that what I state is completely borne out.

Cause.—It is allowed by all, that the immediate cause of this distress has been unfair reduction of wages, by a few manufacturers in the first instance, but of necessity adopted by others, who had a strong aversion to it, whereby has resulted reduction after reduction, and the present state of things. Mr. Needham of Bolton, in his Evidence, p. 432 of the Report, gave in to the Committee a statement of wages for weaving six-fourths, 60-reed cambrics, at Bolton, the average being taken for seven years together, from 1797 to 1834, together with the average price paid for flour, meal, potatoes, butcher's meat and rent for the same period, all extracted from his master's book, and from the workhouse book. This table shows in so clear and conclusive a manner the downward progress that has taken place in the condition of the hand-loom weavers, arising out of successive reductions of wages, that I would respectfully recommend a careful examination of it to you, Sir, and to every one who wishes to know the present condition of the weaving body. This statement of decline is confirmed by every witness prepared to go into detail. Mr. Needham gave in a table, in which he stated the rent of a four-loom house, for the period I named, from 1797 up to the time he gave his evidence, dividing that time into periods of seven years each; and I have taken down from that evidence what I will now read to the Committee, and I think then that no honourable Member will be at a loss to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion in his own mind, that the distress given in evidence by the hand-loom weavers has not been in any way overcharged. In this table he gives the rent which the weaver had to pay, and the number of pieces it required to pay his rent during each successive seven years. In the first seven years, the price he had for weaving *six pieces* would pay his rent; in the second seven years, it required him to weave *nine pieces* to pay his rent; in the third seven years, *twelve and one third pieces*; in the fourth seven years, *sixteen pieces*; in the fifth seven years, *twenty-two pieces*; and in the two last years, *twenty-five pieces*. The weaver had to weave those to enable him to pay the rent for a four-loom house; that is, such a house as he could put four looms in, and work them. Then he gives in each of those successive periods, taken from the workhouse book, in the town of Bolton, the quantity of flour which one week's work would purchase, the quantity of oatmeal that one week's work would purchase, the quantity of potatoes that one week's work would purchase, and the quantity of butcher's meat that one week's work would purchase. In doing this, he takes the price of wages for weaving one piece of six-fourths Bolton cambric, 120 shots per inch, and 24 yards in length; and this work he states,

which

which was confirmed by other witnesses from the neighbourhood, is a good week's work for a weaver. I will now read the result of the abstract I have made from this table.

The first seven years the weaver got 26 *s.* 8 *d.* for weaving one piece; this is from 1797 to 1804. That sum would purchase him 100 lbs. of flour, *or* 142 lbs. of oatmeal, *or* 826 lbs. of potatoes, *or* 55 lbs. of butcher's meat, making a general average of 281 lbs. The next period of seven years goes from 1804 to 1811; the average wages in that period of seven years was 20 *s.*, which in the seven years preceding had been 26 *s.* 8 *d.*, showing a decline in money of 25 per cent. The flour that money would purchase would be 79 lbs.; oatmeal, 115 lbs.; potatoes, 720 lbs.; and of butcher's meat, 38 lbs.; and, taking the general average of those four articles he would be able to purchase 238 lbs., whereas in the seven years preceding, he could purchase 281 lbs. This shows a decline in his command over the necessaries of life in the second period of seven years, as compared with the first period, of 16 ⅓ per cent. I wish just to state here, that it has been often observed that, though the money wages for weaving have fallen, yet the price of the necessaries of life have fallen also, and that, on that account, the condition of the weaver is not so wretched as it has been represented; and to put this in its true light, I have shown in this table the money wages, the decline in those wages, and also the decline in the command he had over the necessaries of life, that is, over the purchase of flour, oatmeal, potatoes and butcher's meat, from the money he received. This is the result of my own calculation fromthe table delivered in by Mr. Needham. In the third period of seven years, the wages of the weaver, which had been 26 *s.* 8 *d.* in the first period, and 20 *s.* in the second period, was reduced to 14 *s.* 7 *d.* in this third period; that is, his money wages, showing a decline in money of 27 per cent. between the third period, as compared with the second, and 45 per cent. as compared with the first period. This 14 *s.* 7 *d.* would purchase him 60 lbs. of flour, 79 lbs. of oatmeal, 360 lbs. of potatoes, or 26 lbs. of butcher's meat, giving a general average of 131 lbs., whereas in the second period his wages would purchase him 238 lbs., and in the first period 281 lbs. This shews a decline in the third seven years, as compared with the second seven years, of 45 per cent., and as compared with the first seven years of 55 ⅓ per cent., in his command over the necessaries of life. I will now take the fourth seven years, from 1818 to 1825. His wages, which had been 14 *s.* 7 *d.* in the period ending in 1818, was reduced to 8 *s.* 9 *d.* This sum would purchase him 48 lbs. of flour, 64 lbs. of oatmeal, 300 lbs. of potatoes, or 20 lbs. of butcher's meat; and, taking the average of each, it would be 108 lbs. against 131 lbs. in the former period, that is, the period immediately preceding. This shows a decline in money wages of 40 per cent. as compared with the third period, and 63 per cent. as compared with the second period; and the decline in his command over the necessaries of life is 17½ per cent. in this period as compared with the preceding seven years, and 61½ per cent. as compared with the first seven years. I now come to the fifth seven years, beginning with 1825 and ending with 1832. The average wages of the weaver for those seven years was 6 *s.* 4 *d.* against 8 *s.* 9 *d.* which he had in the seven years preceding; that shows a decline in money of 27½ per cent. as compared with the seven years immediately preceding, and 76 per cent. as compared with the first period. This would purchase him 38 lbs. of flour, 48 lbs. of oatmeal, 230 lbs. of potatoes, or 15 lbs. of butcher's meat; an equal proportion of each of those things would be 83 lbs. against 108 lbs. in the period immediately preceding; and the decline in this fifth seven years as compared with the fourth is 23 per cent., and as compared with the first seven years, 70½ per cent., in his command over the necessaries of life. The last period given in Mr. Needham's table is two years, from 1832 to 1835. The wages in this period, of which the average in the seven years preceding had been 6 *s.* 4 *d.*, is now reduced to 5 *s.* 6 *d.*; but it is fair to observe, that the wages were reduced in 1829 to 5 *s.* 6 *d.* The fifth period of seven years into which he divides his table extends to 1832. If it had ended in 1829 the wages would have been much higher, taking the seven years immediately preceding 1829; 5 *s.* 6 *d.* have been the wages for the last six years, I believe; but that is stated fully in the evidence in the tables (Mr. Makin's of Bolton) given in of the wages from 1797 up to the period that the witnesses gave their evidence. Taking these last two years, and comparing them with the preceding seven years ending in 1832, the decline in money as compared with the fifth period is 13 per cent., and as compared with the first period, 79½ per cent. In those two years his weekly wages would purchase him

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40 lbs. of flour, 58 lbs. of oatmeal, 220 lbs. of potatoes, or 14 lbs. of butcher's meat; and, taking the average, it is the same as it was in the seven years preceding, 83 lbs.; and the decline in this period as compared with the first seven years, in the command which his money wages would give him over the necessaries of life, is 70½ per cent. I now put in the table which I have referred to, and which I have deduced from Mr. Needham's table, given in his evidence, pages 432 and 433:—

From 1797 to 1804:

1st 7 years -	100 lbs.	flour,	Wages for weaving 1 piece, 24 yards, of 6-4ths Bolton cambric, 120 shots per inch (say one week's work for a weaver), 26 *s.* 8 *d.*
	142	oatmeal,	
	826	potatoes,	
	55	butcher's meat.	
	4) 1,123		
General average	281		

From 1804 to 1811:

2d 7 years -	79 lbs.	flour,	Wages in this period for the same, 20 *s.* Decline in money 25 per cent.
	115	oatmeal,	
	720	potatoes,	
	38	butcher's meat.	
	4) 952		
General average	238	- Decline per cent. in second seven years, as compared with first, 16⅓, in the command the weaver had over the necessaries of life.	

From 1811 to 1818:

3d 7 years -	60 lbs.	flour,	Wages in this period for the same, 14 *s.* 7 *d.* Decline in money 27 per cent. compared with second period, and 45 per cent. as compared with first period.
	79	oatmeal,	
	360	potatoes,	
	26	butcher's meat.	
	4) 525		
	131	- Decline in third seven years, as compared with second seven years, 45 per cent., and as compared with first seven years, 55⅓ per cent.	

From 1818 to 1825:

4th 7 years - -	48 lbs.	flour,	Wages in this period for the same, 8 *s.* 9 *d.* Decline in money 40 per cent. as compared with third period, and 63 per cent. as compared with second period.
	64	oatmeal,	
	300	potatoes,	
	20	butcher's meat.	
	4) 432		
	108	- Decline in fourth seven years, as compared with third seven years, 17½ per cent., and as compared with first seven years, 61½ per cent.	

From 1825 to 1832:

5th 7 years - -	38 lbs.	flour,	Wages in this period for the same, 6 *s.* 4 *d.* Decline in money 27½ per cent. as compared with fourth period, and 76 per cent. as compared with first period.
	48	oatmeal,	
	230	potatoes,	
	15	butcher's meat.	
	4) 331		
	83	- Decline in fifth seven years, as compared with fourth seven years, 23 per cent., and as compared with first seven years, 70½ per cent.	

From 1832 to 1835:

6th period - -	40 lbs.	flour,	Wages in this period for the same, 5 *s.* 6 *d.* Decline in money, as compared with fifth period, 13 per cent., and 79½ per cent. compared with first period.
	58	oatmeal,	
	220	potatoes,	
	14	butcher's meat.	
	4) 332		
	83	- Decline in this period, as compared with first seven years, 70½ per cent.	

I now come to the REMEDY. The remedy required appears to be, to create a competition amongst manufacturers to give good wages, by protecting those

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who are disposed to do so, placing the controlling power of regulating wages in their hands, instead of allowing that power to be, as it now is, in the hands of those who generally take the lead in reducing wages. A plan of taking periodical averages of wages paid for all sorts of hand-loom weaving, on which to found a minimum, has been suggested to effect this object, as preferable to boards of trade composed of masters and men. The former plan has been discussed amongst the weavers since the Report of the Committee was framed, and has met pretty generally with their approval.

2. Up to what time do the last two years stated in Mr. Needham's table extend?—Up to the time that Mr. Needham gave his evidence in 1834. I have made inquiries since, and I believe that the honourable Member for Bolton will bear me out in what I say, that the weavers are in no better situation now with respect to wages than they were when that evidence was given.

3. Are they as well off?—I have understood from Mr. Makin, whom I saw a few weeks since, that they are not so well off.

4. Are the warp and weft of the same qualities as they were when the weaver could gain 26 *s.* 8 *d.* a week, he being now only able to get 5 *s.* 6 *d.* a week?—I believe the warp and the weft was as good then as it is now for weaving that description of manufacture. It was always spun from the best cotton that could be procured, and it is so still; and I think if the Committee will refer to the evidence they will find that that is stated by the manufacturers and operatives from Bolton. I am not a practical manufacturer of muslins, but I have reason to believe from the inquiries I have made, that there is no alteration in the quality of the work that can make any material difference in the income of the weavers. As I have observed before, they always selected the best cotton that could be purchased in the market to spin the kind of yarn used for this species of cloth I am speaking of; and if the yarn was not good, I do not see how they could weave it at all. There was always a difference in the quality of the yarn at former periods, and there is so now.

5. Is it not usual to introduce that labour among younger people than it was in 1794?—The weavers are compelled from necessity to set their children to work at a time when they ought not to do it. If they can get them into a loom, and get 1 *s.* or 2 *s.* a week from their earnings, they are glad to do so, but the work is the same as used to afford the wages I have stated; and when four-fifths of those wages are gone, it shows that the condition of the labourer must be lamentably worse.

6. You think that the ability of a young person of 12 or 13 to weave a piece was just as great then as it is now?—Had it been called into exercise, the ability of a young person was as great as it is now.

7. Then the report of the improvements in the looms in the district of Lancashire does not appear to be correct?—There has been the dandy-loom introduced at Bolton, and that may have added some facilities in production to those who can work on the dandy-loom. Mr. Makin and the other witnesses who came up here detailed in evidence the difference between the labour on the dandy-loom and others, but I believe that the dandy-loom cannot be worked by children at that young age spoken of. It requires a man of a stronger constitution than a child to work them in the manner that they are wrought. That they could not work the loom at all, I am not prepared to say.

8. A dandy-loom is comparatively of late introduction?—I do not know the date; it is within a few years.

9. Do you think a man could work a dandy-loom as many hours in a day as an ordinary hand-loom?—The dandy-loom is a hand-loom, if I am correctly informed upon the subject: I never saw one at work. Those dandy-looms are worked by persons who employ men to come on to their premises to work, in a sort of factory. Those weavers have to attend, if they work at the dandy-loom, the same number of hours as they do in the factories, and their toil is excessive. If I had expected to be examined, I would have referred to the evidence of Robert Crawford, a Preston weaver, who came up here and gave evidence upon that point.

10. The dandy-loom is not introduced into the domestic manufacture?—I have not heard of any being introduced into the house of an individual weaver. They are used on the premises of those who have a number of looms collected together in a shop. The work is not given out to be wove at the cottage of the

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weaver, but the person who provides the loom pays the weaver so much for working a piece on the master's loom and in his shop.

11. Do you know the wages they get, as compared with the ordinary loom?—I can be prepared at any future time to give any information upon that subject.

12. Is there any obstruction in the way of these dandy-looms being in an ordinary weaver's house, the same as the ordinary hand-looms?—I really cannot state that. I do not feel prepared to give evidence upon that point; I never saw them at work.

13. Is the supposition correct, that the dandy-loom is a machine somewhere between the hand-loom and the power-loom?—It is a machine worked by human labour, the same as the hand-loom, but not at the house of the cottager. There may have been some additions made to it, whereby the weaver may produce more than by the old hand-loom, but if he does do that he has to perform harder work, because, in every inch of this cloth we have now been speaking of, the weaver has to throw the shuttle across, in making one inch, 120 times; now, if you can get a dandy-loom, by which you can throw the shuttle across 240 times, you, or any rational man, would be led to conclude that the throwing the shuttle across 240 times instead of 120 times, is almost tantamount to double the labour. I well recollect, that the person from Preston that gave evidence upon the subject of the dandy-looms, stated, he had gone there himself for a limited time, two months or something of that sort, and had worked upon it, and he told the difference he could make in wages, but he said both he and others in the shop had to work so hard that the sweat was constantly running off their faces, and he went back to his own residence, and would not work at the dandy-loom.

14. But, even with this harder work, are the dandy-loom weavers better off than the ordinary weavers?—If they get more money they can procure more of the necessaries of life.

15. Did you ever hear why the dandy-looms were not introduced into the houses of the common weavers; is it that the poverty of the people would not enable them to buy them?—They could not find the means to purchase them themselves; but if there was any advantage in working them in their own houses, there are some of them that would get loans of money from their employers to enable them to purchase them, but I never heard of them doing so. I never heard of their being used any where but in factories or shops.

16. You think their not being employed in the cottage manufacture arises from the severe labour, and not the inability to purchase?—The increase of the labour and the difficulty in getting the looms induces them to go on as they are.

17. Does the power-loom come into competition with all sorts of hand-loom weaving?—The power-loom has never been used yet in making the cloth upon which Mr. Needham gave evidence, that is, six-fourths cambric. It has been tried, but the witnesses from Bolton stated that no advantage would accrue from the adoption of the power-loom to make that description of cloth; for to use it would require one person to tend one loom, and having a person to attend one loom would subject the party using them to the same rate of wages that he pays for out-door work, besides the expenses of the machinery and buildings. My opinion is decidedly that the power-loom will never be able to produce the greatest part of the weaving now carried on in the borough of Bolton, in a way that will give encouragement to the employment of capital for that purpose.

18. Has it come within your knowledge whether those persons engaged in the weaving of that cloth with which the power-loom does not come into competition are as badly off as those engaged in weaving cloth with which it does come into competition?—They are now worse off. We manufacture between two and three thousand pieces a week of hand-loom cloth, and what we manufacture is a cloth with which the power-loom does compete, and we pay better wages than the Bolton manufacturers pay to their weavers of fancy goods and muslins, with which no similar goods made by power-looms come into competition.

19. Then the power-loom is not the cause of their destitution?—I cannot see that it is in any way the cause of their destitution. The same remark applies to the manufacture of silk and linen, in both which branches the power-loom has not been to any extent yet introduced, and, from the evidence given before the Committee, you will find that those employed in the manufacture of linen and silk are in almost as destitute a condition as the muslin weavers of Scotland and Bolton.

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20. Can a hand-loom weaver at his present wages produce cotton goods as cheap as a power-loom?—It was stated in evidence by a witness from Manchester that a manufacturer of fustians by power-looms had put a stop to that manufacture, and had changed his looms to a different description of manufacture, because he could get his work wove out of doors cheaper than he could produce it by machinery. Fustian is a heavy article made use of for domestic purposes.

21. You stated that the hand-loom weavers had got a notion that their destitute condition arose from the home competition of the master manufacturers. Can you explain that or the cause of it?—I gave evidence on that question before the Committee last year, and I do not wish to take up the time of the Committee any further on the subject. If it is referred to, the Committee will see my views of it fully detailed.

22. Did you at all go into evidence on that occasion, as to whether there was greater competition among the manufacturers now than 20 years ago?—No, I have not put down that as one of the causes. The main cause on which the witnesses gave evidence was competition arising amongst manufacturers themselves, in the first instance, from being reduced by the operation of what had been going on, and a disposition to increase their quantity, and manufacture cheaper one than another; and to effect this, they made deduction after deduction, till they brought the weaver into the state he now is.

23. Was one cause of increased competition the increased profits upon their trade?—I should say just the reverse.

24. Was the cause of their increased competition the diminution of their profits, which compelled them to make an increased quantity of goods to increase their profits?—Unquestionably.

25. You stated that the hand-looms were fully employed generally; can you account for that under a diminution of profits?—There is a demand in the market, and has been for several years, that takes off all the goods that are produced, and the object of the manufacturers has been to meet that demand at any price they could get; and when no other alternative could be resorted to than that of reducing wages to supply this demand at such prices as they could obtain, they have resorted to that expedient.

26. From what source does this increased demand arise?—I apprehend the increased demand for exportation has been one main cause of the increase in this demand.

27. Do you think that increased demand arises rather from the export trade than the home trade?—While the export trade has been on the increase, I am satisfied that the home trade has been undergoing a diminution.

28. You stated that the hand-loom weaver was obliged to go to the low-wages payer, because he had run into debt with his master; how did he happen to go to a low-waged master in the first instance?—I think the honourable Member mistook my statement. I stated that when he was working for a low-paying master he was obliged to remain in the employment of that manufacturer, on account of his poverty; this poverty, in the first instance, having induced him to obtain loans of money from his employer, with an understanding that a part of what he so borrowed should be paid in by instalment every time he carried in any finished work; but being in deep distress when he carries in the work, he entreats his master not to stop the sum that was agreed on when the money was lent; and, on this account, the tie that the master has upon the weaver, though he pays low wages, is prolonged; for if he wanted to leave, the master says, "You owe me so much money, and if you give up your work you must pay off your debt;" and in some instances I believe it has been carried even further than that; that where an agreement has been entered into between the workman and his employer, he should pay the money borrowed by instalment when he carried in any work; some masters have insisted upon its being adhered to when they found they could get a profit by the weaver, and have even summoned the weavers before magistrates to enforce the agreement that was entered into.

29. What was the reason of his going to a low-wage payer in the first instance, rather than to another who paid better?—All manufacturers are not perhaps low payers at the same time. Manufacturers whom I have known, that have paid liberal wages, have, from the distress that they have been brought into by successive falls in the value of goods, been reduced to a state that they have been compelled to adopt low wages themselves; and having adopted once the lowest sum that any one gives in wages, they generally adhere to it; for if they had the

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character of giving good wages before they reduced to the lowest point that any manufacturer was known to pay, their character is gone, and they persevere in that practice.

30. Then, though they are fully employed, he has not employment for them all at the better wages that they received before?—Very few at times are disposed to increase their manufacture.

31. You have stated, at those different periods it required an increased quantity of goods to make up the same amount of money; had the weaver any additional facilities in working up these goods, or did it take him the same length of time to work up the goods at the latter period as at the former period?—The weavers state over and over again, that they could have done as much work in the first and second periods as they could execute now. I do not see how they could have any increased facility whatever, unless the yarn they work up is better than it was, which I very much doubt.

32. It takes him three times as much time to work up three times the quantity of cloth?—They could work 30 pieces of cloth at the former period in the time they can work 30 pieces now.

33. What was the time at which the power-loom most came into competition with the hand-loom?—There were very few power-looms at work in 1818, and the wages of the weavers had fallen from 26*s.* 8*d.* (the average of seven years, beginning with 1797 and ending with 1804,) to 10*s.* in 1818. The average of the seven years beginning with 1818 and ending with 1825, was 8*s.* 9*d.*; and the beginning of this period was before any power-looms of any consequence were introduced.

34. Then to what do you attribute the great fall in their wages between 1797 and 1804?—This country was then at war, and there were very great fluctuations frequently took place during the time we were at war. If I recollect right, in the year 1811 or 1812 we had the American embargo, and the Non-intercourse Act was passed soon after.

35. Take the first period, first between 1797 and 1804, when there was a considerable fall. What do you conceive was the cause of the first fall?—There must have been an increase in the production of those articles, I apprehend in consequence of the high profit that was obtained upon them, and more weavers in all probability were brought into that employment than otherwise would have been but for the high wages.

36. Would not the high profits have a tendency to increase the rate of wages?—Not unless the demand was sufficient to take off at high profits the increased quantity produced.

37. Was not there, during that period, rather a deficiency in labour, compared with the work demanded, than any great surplus?—There was at that period, I believe, a demand for all the cloth that could be produced, and why the wages should have fallen between 1804 and 1811 in the manner they did it is difficult to account for here without having reference to what took place at the time; and not having made any inquiry into this subject, I cannot speak to it.

38. Is it not the case, if from any cause the raw article rises, that there is a reduction in wages?—Unquestionably. It certainly has that operation.

39. Is it not likely that an embargo or other political causes might, by obstructing the raw commodity coming into the market, have been met by a corresponding reduction in wages?—I remember in 1812, or thereabouts, when the price of upland cotton, which had been for many years from 1*s.* 4*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.*, advanced to 3*s.* That so raised the cost of the manufacture that great distress followed, and many who had purchased cotton at that price sold the yarn they had spun from it at a price not exceeding the cost of the cotton; and that arose entirely from the difference between this country and America, for what was sold at 3*s.* was soon after down to 2*s.*, and the manufacture was for a time suspended; I mean partially so.

40. Would not that have the effect of leading to a want of employment or a reduction of wages?—Unquestionably.

41. Is there anything in your evidence, or that of others, to show the number of persons supposed to be employed at the hand-looms in Lancashire?—Mr. Makin gave evidence as to the number. He took great pains to collect what he thought was the number comprised in the manufacture of cotton. It is impossible, without obtaining Parliamentary returns, to come at any correct conclusion

as

as to the number. It is nothing more than an approximation to the truth that can be arrived at.

42. What do you consider to be the general character of the manufacturing employers as a class, as to wealth and capital, and general respectability. Do you consider that the employers vary very much in that respect?—There are many manufacturers who are persons of capital, and very respectable in every sense. There are many who do not possess much capital, but employ those weavers to gain a livelihood.

43. Would not the establishment of a minimum of wages, upon the plan that has been generally proposed, tend to throw those employers out of the trade altogether?—I think not. My reason for thinking so is, that he is now under the necessity of paying pretty near the same price that the more wealthy manufacturer does, otherwise he could not go on; but the way in which his operations act injuriously upon the weaver, is, that when there is a period of slackness of demand, some of the men of small means have recourse to a reduction of wages, while some of them, and also some of those who have more enlarged means, wish the reduction not to take place; but one manufacturer, who only makes a few goods in a district, can, by the example he sets, bring down the prices of the other manufacturers. He does not profit by it himself, he only steals a march upon the manufacturer who wishes to uphold wages; he may get a week's work in before the other manufacturers reduce; for no sooner has the reduction taken place in the wages than a reduction takes place in the value of the article.

44. Is it not that advantage of a week occasionally, and other slight advantages, that keep him employed at all in a trade which is one of small profits?—Not by any means. A man of small means can generally manufacture quite as cheap as a man of large means, and often does cheaper; for a man of large means generally employs servants and clerks to do the work for him, which he has to pay; whereas a man of small means does all that work himself. But the reduction of wages does not always commence with a man of small means. I have known several instances, where those possessing large means have been more forward in making reductions than the poorest manufacturer.

45. You have said that the master manufacturer has the hand-loom weaver very much in his power in consequence of the transactions that take place between them; would he not continue to have him in his power after any enactment has taken place establishing a minimum of wages?—If a minimum of wages was established, I apprehend it would lead to the advance of wages, slowly but surely, in a way that would place the weaver in better circumstances by-and-by; and if he got into better circumstances, he would then find out the means of getting out of the hands of the low-paying master, and make choice of a master willing to pay the higher wages.

46. Are you not of opinion that if a minimum of wages was established, there are a number of individuals of the class you have mentioned disposed to procure their work at the lowest wages, who would set to work to evade that law by every means in their power?—That makes it necessary that some law should be passed effective for the object. There may be difficulties, I am willing to allow, but I think it not impracticable; but there is another view of the subject which I wish to state: if a minimum was fixed, it would give confidence to those possessed of capital, and who have the means of employing an increased number of weavers; and if they were free from the apprehensions that any one in the trade could manufacture below the wages they were paying, they would be willing to take the weavers out of the hand of the low-paying master.

47. Would not that depend upon the extent of the demand?—The demand would be better if wages were improved; for I contend there is a production too excessive compared with the means of consumption of the millions in this country. It is injurious to the manufacturer and his weaver; the weaver is compelled to weave more than he ought to weave, and this occasions a glut in the market, which favours none but those who profit upon the distresses of the people.

48. You have spoken of the destitute condition of the weaver; what is the condition of the persons employed as manufacturers?—A great many whom I have known, who were formerly manufacturers, have been reduced to poverty and want themselves. I have known several manufacturers who used to accompany me to market, whose children, owing to the distressed condition they have been reduced to, and the change of things that has taken place, have some of them been transported for crime, others imprisoned, and others thrown upon the parish, in order to obtain support. A number that used to accompany myself, when I first com-

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menced manufacturer, and going to the market that my father had attended, have been reduced to poverty and want equally as bad as any of the weavers that have come up here.

49. Do those cases form the exception or the general rule?—I can only speak from recollection, which I would not say is perfectly correct; but I think three-fourths of the manufacturers at least, in the neighbourhood where I reside, have been reduced to poverty in the manner I have stated.

50. Were those parties persons of good conduct, frugality and prudence?—Quite as industrious and economical as the manufacturing body in general are.

51. Does the reduction of the prices of cloth, or the reduction of wages first commence, as the cause or effect; is the depression in the price of the work, or is the fall in the price of the article first observed?—A fall in the price of goods in the market, or a difficulty in making sales, generally precedes a fall in the prices of weaving.

52. You have said it is not for the benefit of the master manufacturer or weaver this constant variation of prices; are there other persons, such as houses of consignment, or persons described as proprietors of "slaughter-houses," who derive benefit from the distress of the master manufacturers?—I have not a doubt of it.

53. And they have an interest in keeping up the present state of things?—If to acquire money be an interest, they have. That state of things frequently leads to a glut of goods in the market, and when it becomes overstocked it causes needy manufacturers, and often men of considerable means too, to sell goods for considerably less than they were produced for; and there are persons who buy those goods at a price for which they know they can never be produced; and if they do not immediately sell them, they are laid up and sold at a profit afterwards.

54. Then those persons consider the trade in a wholesome state when a vast body of the manufacturers and working classes are in a state of great suffering and distress?—They may consider their state prosperous when others are in a state of great distress.

Mercurii, 18° *die Martii*, 1835.

JOHN MAXWELL, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

John Bowring, Esq., LL.D., a Member of the Committee; Examined.

J. Bowring, Esq., LL.D., M.P.

18 March 1835.

55. HAVE you been recently in France, or can you give any information regarding any attempts which have been made for the purpose of relieving the distress of the hand-loom weavers in Lyons, or elsewhere?—I have been in France a considerable portion of the last three or four years; I was there as a commercial commissioner, and it was a part of my duty to investigate the state of the manufacturing classes. I was at Lyons more than once, before and after the disturbances that took place between the masters and the weavers; the situation of the weavers was one of extreme distress, and it is known that at last it broke out into open rebellion. There does exist in France an admirable institution, founded by Napoleon, which enables the masters and the men to come into friendly contact; it is a representative council, formed of masters and men, the masters having a majority of one, and this council exercises certain valuable and important functions in the misunderstandings that take place. It does not establish wages; it is not a tribunal that can be appealed to, to decide what general price ought to be paid for any particular work, but it has the power of interfering to enforce the contracts made between masters and weavers, and a great many points are constantly referred to it as a court of conciliation, and it settles almost every question other than the question of the average rate of wages, by amicable interference. This council is a representative body, both as respects the masters and as respects the men; and every weaver who has a certain number of looms is an elector to the council. It was believed, when the distress became extreme, that this organization might be extended and made useful for introducing an arbitrary minimum rate of wages, inasmuch as all the masters were represented, and a very large number of the weavers. This tribunal was a highly popular one, and I think something like it might advantageously be established in this country: whether it can exercise all the functions that have been suggested by certain honourable Members I very much doubt; though sure I am that habitual intercourse between masters and men is a valuable and useful object to be attained, and

and that it does facilitate the settlement of many questions. In Lyons, the weavers and a certain portion of the masters thought that a similar delegation from both bodies might be charged with the function of regulating wages; that the masters meeting in general assembly, and the weavers meeting in general assembly, a given number of men should be chosen by each, possessing mutual confidence, and that they might discuss the establishment of a tariff of wages, which should be peremptory; they did so meet, and the authorities consented that, if they could determine a rate of wages to be paid, after a due examination of the position of the masters and the men, the authorities, I say, having heard the discussions which took place, did determine that they would give to the decisions of those bodies the force of law; and a decree was published, which established the rate, or *mercuriale* of wages, as it was called. There were returns received from all quarters as to the existing contracts between masters and men; an average tariff was fixed on, which was recognised by the authorities, by the prefect on the part of the government, and by the municipality on the part of the town; the authorities claimed the power of interference to give effect to the tariff. I will on a future examination, in a more detailed manner, state the consequences which resulted, and my opinions of the causes why the arrangement failed; at present, suffice it to say, that through the distress of the weavers on the one side, and competition of the masters on the other, it was very soon found that the experiment could not long continue: the weavers, as it is known, appealed to the authorities there for their sanction to support the tariff; the distress increased, and soon the whole affairs of the town were stopped; the population broke out into insurrection; the prefect found himself in a state of helplessness; the government interfered, censured, and displaced the prefect; the workmen drove the troops from the town, and established a temporary authority.

56. Was that the first time of its breaking out into armed rebellion?—There has been open armed resistance on two or three occasions; this was the second. I shall give no opinion at present as to the different circumstances which may exist here, but of course I cannot but have received a certain impression from the substantive and positive fact that the experiment of establishing a forced rate of wages was made on a great scale, and that the distress consequent upon it was dreadful, particularly to the working classes, who were the principal sufferers; the whole organization of society was disturbed, and Lyons from that moment to this has never recovered its former position. Not but that it is desirable that some means should be found for bringing men and masters together amicably, to discuss many points where the discussion might be beneficial; and the time I hope is coming when Parliament will come to the serious consideration of those causes which displace labour, and for the distress resulting from which, the Legislature is bound, if it can, to find some alleviation or remedy.

57. How long did that tariff continue?—Merely a few weeks.

58. At what period was that?—The tariff, I think, was in 1832.

59. Was this a general measure throughout France, or restricted to Lyons?—It extended only to Lyons.

60. What was its operation; how did it cause the effect you state as being so lamentable; are you satisfied that the regulation of wages at Lyons was the cause of the eruption?—Yes, I think there can be no doubt of that. Its operation was precisely this: The high-minded and intelligent and wealthy masters felt themselves bound by the engagement they had undertaken, but others, desirous to enrich themselves, (and there were a great many such,) made bargains with weavers at lower terms than the tariff; and it was very soon found that though for a certain time the majority were submissive to the tariff, yet its regulations were soon broken, there being a much stronger interest in violating the tariff than there was in preserving it: an interest created on the one side by the distress of the weavers, who could not all obtain work upon the terms of the tariff, and were willing to work for lower wages; and that of the masters, on the other hand, who naturally wished to pay as low wages as possible. Thus, those among them who were obedient to the laws, were made the victims of those who were not obedient. A certain number of the principal manufacturers kept faith; they were earnestly desirous of making the experiment; some I saw, said they would give anything to keep up the rate of wages; but they were interfered with by interlopers, so that the tariff placed the honourable in a worse position than the dishonourable. The course of things was precisely this: A distressed weaver would go to a master and say, "Sir, I want work," and is answered "I cannot pay you according to the terms of the tariff; it gives me no profit." The weaver says, "But I must have

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have work at all events; I will not starve. The tariff gives ten, I will take it at nine; nine is better than nothing; I will tell nobody." The article is produced; the man who has paid ten finds himself in the market meeting one who has paid nine; how can he compete with him? he is forced to lower his own rate of wages; a general fall becomes inevitable, while there is a supply of labour beyond the demand.

61. You stated that the acts of the council were legalised by an imperial decree; was there any penalty annexed to the violation of the act of council?—I stated that the imperial decree had first created the body in which the masters were represented, but not that an imperial decree had authorized the establishment of a rate of wages.

62. Was any penalty attached to the violation of the regulations?—Yes, and there began the difficulty. Numbers of persons were summoned to fulfil the tariff, and they were but a small proportion of those who had violated it, so that the law became impotent; for the magistrates could not force a rate of wages which manufacturers refused to give.

63. Do you know whether more or less were employed in consequence of this regulation?—The insurrection led to the driving away of a great number of those who were not natives of Lyons; and their forcible banishment was necessary to enable those left to get employment.

64. Do you mean that the fixing of this rate of wages at too high a level for the state of trade to bear, threw masses of workmen out of employment, and that the pressure of their want induced them to offer at lower prices; and that at the time that it produced this effect, it produced an operation on many masters, who finding they could not afford to bear the losses which a high tariff might impose on trade, and that many honest masters might bear; many masters, under this pressure, were also induced to purchase the labour so offered by distressed weavers at a cheaper rate than that pointed out?—That is the fact.

64*. Will the honourable Member favour the Committee with particulars of the institutions which exist in France for the arrangement of disputes between masters and men?—I will at the next meeting be prepared to give an account of the laws which exist in France in this particular, and their operation; always however premising that I reserve to myself the right of deciding how far such a legislation may be applicable to England, and with a thorough understanding that any opinions I express as to France shall not be deemed to prejudge the question as to Great Britain.

Sabbati, 21° die Martii, 1835.

JOHN MAXWELL, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

John Bowring, Esq., LL.D., a Member of the Committee; again Examined.

J. Bowring, Esq., LL.D., M.P.

21 March 1835.

65. WILL Dr. Bowring have the goodness to state any further facts which he knows regarding attempts to legislate on the subject of wages in France, or can he give the Committee any information on that subject?—I ought probably to commence by saying, that the dispositions of the Code Napoleon are exceedingly simple as respects the question of wages generally; namely, that the evidence of the master is to be received on all questions of dispute, and that the only restrictions in bargains between the master and man are these, that no man can sell his wages or his labour in perpetuity, or make any other than specific or temporary bargains.

66. That applies to the question of a permanent, in contradistinction to a temporary employment?—It is in fact the question of slavery; of how far a bargain might be made which disposes of the labour of a man for life.

67. Could he get from his master an advance of wages?—Clearly. The immediate object of the Committee, as I understood, was to obtain information on an institution which was created by Buonaparte to replace the old system of interference which existed before the Revolution.

Before the Revolution there was a body called Maitregardes, which interfered arbitrarily under the directions of various guilds or companies, whose powers of legislation were very great, and which assumed a direction over labour in a thousand ways. They decided on the length, and breadth, and manner of weaving and dyeing; they had a right of entry into the houses of weavers without notice, and they, in fact, represented all the ancient despotism of the guilds

which at a more remote period existed here and elsewhere. Of course this institution was completely broken up by those decrees which grew out of the French Revolution, and which proclaimed what was called "the liberty of industry." They destroyed all the laws with respect to apprenticeship, and recognised equality as a general right. This state of things still exists, so that any man may work at any trade in which he can find any body to employ him; the sole condition of the general law being, that he is to bear with him a small book called a "Livret," which contains the history of his engagements, the names of his masters, his general conduct and character, and which book he is required to present to any master into whose service he desires to enter; it is, in fact a sort of introductory passport.

It may well be supposed that a change from the ancient to the new system led to a good deal of disorganization and difficulty.

68. Is a livret a book on which he is sworn?—No, a mere record of his manufacturing bargains. The master states there the fact that he was employed for so many years, or months, or days, and the master is bound by law to do it.

69. It is for character, like a servant carrying his character?—Yes, very much so.

70. Is that regulation established by force of law, or is it a voluntary regulation?—By force of law; I now speak of nothing but that which is recognised by law. It was imagined by Buonaparte, that if he could create an institution by which the quarrels between master and man could in some way or other be regulated, and masters and men be brought together, he should get rid of many disagreeable questions, and it would take a great number of cases out of the ordinary tribunals; such a tribunal being charged with many functions of a local nature. In 1806 the first decree appeared, at all events I believe that is the first decree, which established what was called a Conseil des Prud'hommes. This decree regarded the town of Lyons alone. In 1809 a general decree came out, of which I will give the principal heads: it determines that a council shall be established, composed of master-manufacturers and operatives of the different branches of manufacturing labour; the master-manufacturers to have in all cases a majority of one. That any town which through its chamber of commerce shall apply for the establishment of such a council, and has the sanction of the prefect for doing so, shall obtain the right to establish such an institution; and that a third of the members of the conseil des prud'hommes shall be renewed every year.

71. Is that both of the men and of the masters?—Yes, both men and masters. The documents I shall hand in will show the way in which they are summoned and constituted.

72. Is it a change every year?—A third go out every year. The original decree provides, that all master-manufacturers who pay for a patent, as it is called, which is one of the sources of direct taxation in France, shall have a right to vote; and that all workmen, who pay for a patent, should have the same right.

73. Is the price of the patent the same to the master and the man?—No, the amounts of the patents vary; they are classified according to rank.

74. Is the number of masters and artisans equal in the council?—No; invariably one master more than the workmen.

75. You do not happen to know the amount that is paid?—Any return of French taxation will give the grades of payment. Matters went on tolerably well with this organization, till after the late Revolution, when, as the popular power was considerably increased, the men became much dissatisfied with the proportion they had in the representation. In fact, in Lyons, I observe by a return I have got from the council, there were only 60 weavers who paid patent, so that of course their representation was completely absorbed in the greater influence of the masters, and they had little community of feeling with the mass of operatives. The attention of government was called to it, and on the 15th of January 1832 there was a new organization of the council at Lyons. Under the old system of patents, there were, as I mentioned, no more than 60 weavers who were represented in the largest manufacturing town, which is Lyons; and it was found necessary to alter the legislation so as to popularize the institution: the consequence is, that according to the last return I have, there were 778 workmen represented. This grew out of the change of the qualification, which is now, and has been since the 15th of January 1832, that every workman possessing four looms has a right to vote for the election of councillors.

76. He is an elector?—He is an elector of this council. So that at Lyons the number of men represented, instead of 60, became 778.

 77. Originally

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77. Originally it was said the masters were to have a majority of one?—That is in the council; the masters were to have a majority of the council, one more representative of the masters than of the men. But I am now speaking of the constitutive body; all the masters have a right, as they all pay for the patent, and they were all represented; but as only a small number of weavers paid for the patent, it is clear the weaving representation was no fair representation of the whole body of weavers. The system is now changed; the weavers are no longer represented in consequence of being directly taxed; a weaver being responsible to a direct taxation does not give him the right of voting; the right now depends on his possessing a certain number of looms.

78. Was it imperative under the original constitution that the masters should exceed in the council by one; was it imperative that those who represented the operatives should be equal to the masters minus one?—Yes, clearly. The council always consists of an odd number, and the odd number is given to the masters.

79. It is considered it would not be fairly constituted unless such proportions existed, whatever the numbers might be?—I will give an example by-and-by. The extent of the council depends on the extent of the population; there were towns in which the number was only five, and at Lyons it is as many as 21.

80. The council would not sit unless there was one master more than the operatives, to exercise the functions of president?—The president is on all occasions a master.

81. Could the committee sit if there are more masters than one over the operatives?—Yes; I have often seen only one master sitting in council, and the rest operatives; for the operatives, as you may naturally suppose, are more anxious about and more interested in the decisions of the council.

82. The dissatisfaction existed, not owing to the proportionate number of persons and the change consequent thereupon, but from the small number who elected the representatives of the working classes?—They were so few that the operatives had no confidence in them.

83. But they were to elect a sufficient number to sit in council?—Yes; but the electors were so few that the representation was little better than that of a close borough.

84. The working classes did not imagine they had their interests properly represented by the 60?—No; and those 60 precisely the wealthiest and most fortunate among them, from the fact of their paying direct taxation.

85. It was the qualification that enabled them to vote?—Yes.

86. Do you know if that circumstance had arisen from the depression of their wages?—No: the original object of Buonaparte was certainly not to popularize the institution; he never dreamed of giving power to popular influences; he wanted to allow a shadow without the reality of representation; his object was to do something to satisfy them to a certain point, but not to let the labouring classes exercise much influence in this council. None but the master weavers either pay direct taxation or possess looms. It may be necessary to mention here, that at Lyons there are no factories, that the whole of the labour is done in the houses of the workmen; there is only hand-loom weaving.

87. What was the price paid for the lowest patent under the old system?—There are seven distinct classes who pay the patent tax; and they are arranged according to their professions, and to the population of the towns they inhabit. I cannot establish accurately a minimum. In the department of the Rhone, of which Lyons is the capital, there were, of 400,000 inhabitants, 11,786 persons in towns of above 5,000 inhabitants who paid the patent, and 6,256 in towns under that population, and the whole amount received was about 1,000,000 of francs; so that the average paid was about 57 francs the individual. Merchants pay 10 % on their rental, besides a fixed tax, whose amount varies with the population of the towns they inhabit; the minimum being 40 francs, the maximum 300 francs. Bankers pay 500 francs throughout France. Travelling traders who journey on horseback 40 francs a year, and 30 francs if they journey on foot.

87*. Suppose there had been 100 or 200 of those who elected, instead of only 60, they could elect the same number of councillors?—Yes. The change of 1832 was only a change of the constitutive power. To show the operation of the system, I will give you the last return from the council of Lyons, as to their present organization. There are at this moment representing the silk manufacturers, that is broad silks, five manufacturers and four weavers; there are two manufacturers and two weavers of ribbons; two manufacturers and two working labourers engaged in the haberdashery trade; two manufacturers and two operatives of hat-making.

88. When you speak of weavers, you speak of those possessing looms that employ

employ a number of operatives?—Yes. I stated before, but it is important the Committee should remember that the organization of the manufacturing population in France is this: there are two classes of weavers, the weaver who possesses the looms, who is called a master weaver, and an inferior weaver, who is called there a *compagnon*. The master weaver receives the whole of the amount from the manufacturer which is paid for weaving; he gives half to the weaver for his labour, and keeps the other half for the use of the loom and other expenses. Those companions, as they are called, who are the subordinate weavers, are not proprietors of looms, and of course they are wholly unrepresented; they have no vote.

89. Those master weavers themselves are generally operatives, so far as working probably a loom of their own?—Invariably. The last return I have from the prefect of Lyons mentions that the greatest number of looms possessed by any individual in that town is 13; that there were 53 persons who possessed six; 82 who possessed five; and 614 who possessed four. Now a man possessing four, five, or six, or any other number of looms, works one himself, for which he obtains the whole of his wages; and his family, his wife or his companions, or other people, work the other looms.

90. What is the connection between the master and the operatives?—If you mean the labouring dependent weaver, he does not come at all in contact with the manufacturer, but the master weaver does.

91. Do you know whether these men do it in the way of speculation as a small factory, or probably work in the same shop and on the same terms as their companions?—All bargains are made between the master weaver and the manufacturer, but the operation of the council (I may as well state now) is most frequently brought to bear on the questions between the two classes of weavers with whom many misunderstandings originate, namely, the companion and the master weaver.

92. Is it the habit of the master weaver to work himself?—The master weaver almost always works himself; he works one of the looms, and then as his prosperity increases he gets other looms about him, for the produce of which he receives half the wages.

93. Is there any class of master manufacturers in Lyons whom you should call superior to the owner of the 13 looms, who is himself a workman; is there any capitalist who might perhaps engage the labour of half a dozen of those possessors of 13, or 12, or 9 looms?—Clearly; but he is denominated a master manufacturer.

94. Is there no higher class of manufacturers; is there no class of capitalists who possess the means of buying and disposing of the produce of a great many, or are the highest class of manufacturers men who work themselves, the maximum of whose possession is only 13 looms?—The master manufacturers of whom I am speaking are the men who occupy a social position above that of the master weavers whom they employ; all the merchants of Lyons are master manufacturers.

95. Is there no instance of a master manufacturer possessing a number of looms under the management of a master workman?—There is only one factory where a great number of workmen are gathered together under the same roof; that is a manufactory where shawls are produced.

96. You said there were no power-looms?—No. The council is composed of 21 members. Of course, as Lyons is a place where the silk-manufacturing interest is greatest, it has been usual to choose the president and vice-president from the master manufacturers of silk. The men meet for the annual election on a day when they are convoked by the municipal authorities; and I have brought one of the documents of convocation issued by the mayor. The prefect directs the lists to be published, and divides the town into certain sections; at Lyons there are eight. The lists are all of them made out by the local authorities, and publicly exhibited by the different mayors, and then a day is fixed; the electors meet in these separate assemblies, and choose their councillor by ballot, but the master manufacturers have ordinarily only one meeting. If it be considered worth while, I will put in the document which exhibits the form of proceeding.

[*The Witness put in the Document.*]

97. You stated the compagnons had no vote at all?—No, none. The prefect's notice of summons is thus headed: "Considering that by the condition of eligibility it is necessary that the workmen in different quarters should be represented in the council of prud'hommes, not only by representatives of their choice, but also by those who dwell in the midst of their electors;

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considering that besides the functions of judges, the prud'hommes exercise surveillance upon the workshops, and it is exceedingly desirable that they should not be removed more than necessary from their own domicile, but that they should be surrounded by those workpeople whom they know, and on whom they can exercise influence; considering that the community of interest and objects that results from good neighbourhood will render more easy their functions of arbitrators and conciliators, which are the most precious attributes of the council, and it is therefore desirable that each section should elect from its own body its own councillor; considering that it results from the electoral legislation, that those who are elected should possess certain qualities, we decree:" then it goes on to provide for the manner of conducting the election. The day of the election is publicly announced, and all the electors are summoned by the mayor's letter of convocation. Five days are allowed after the publication of the lists for any elector who does not appear upon them to claim his electoral rights.

98. Did you mention the qualification of the councillors?—The qualification of a labouring councillor from the workpeople is the possessing four looms; the qualification of a master is that he pays direct taxes; he pays a patent.

99. The qualification for the persons chosen is the same as the qualification for the person choosing?—They choose from their own body; the masters choose their representative from among the masters, and the workmen from among the workmen.

Now the functions that are submitted to these councillors are, first, the preservation of the copyright of patterns; secondly, they exercise their authority generally on all questions of litigation between manufacturers, workmen, dyers, apprentices, and such like, but have no authority whatever out of the manufacturing circle. Their functions are divided into two classes; one a conciliatory function, for which there is a daily sitting, if necessary, and another a judicial function, which has the power of imposing a limited fine, and of subjecting any individual to imprisonment, which must not exceed three days. It is only necessary that two individuals should sit as conciliators, and two only ordinarily sit; but at the greater sitting, which generally takes place in the evening after the labours of the day are over, the whole body sit, and then they become a tribunal of justice.

100. Without an appeal?—There is an appeal beyond the sum of 100 francs; and I find that the influence of the conciliatory court at Lyons was such, that of 4,500 interferences in a conciliatory spirit there were only 100 appeals, and among these appeals very few of the judgments have been reversed. Up to the sum of 100 francs there is no appeal, and the judgment becomes executory immediately; from 100 to 300 francs there is an appeal to the tribunal of commerce.

101. Are all those 4,000-and-odd cases above 100 francs?—No; those are nearly all under.

102. Are they sitting regularly?—They sit daily in the conciliatory court.

103. The owner of four looms is the lowest; the highest has 13. You may take an average between these two, as comprising the great class; six or eight probably. If the master works himself, there are always in the proportion of six compagnons to one master; the minimum is four. Assuming that in every case of arbitration the great mass of workmen are the compagnons who have no looms at all, they have no vote; so that, in fact, all the cases are cases between master manufacturers, are they not?—No; for to this tribunal is submitted everything connected with the misunderstandings among all gradations of the manufacturing classes. The persons elected are judges, who form two classes, the master manufacturers and those who possess four looms. The tribunal being once constituted, every manufacturing litigation is subjected to it.

104. What is analogous in this country? The clashing of interests in this country is between what we understand by the master manufacturer who gives out the materials, and the operative who works the fabric; these are the two persons who have clashing interests; and the great majority, in point of number, is among the operatives. Where is the analogy in the case of the silk manufacturer at Lyons?—This body makes decisions for the whole manufacturing community. This tribunal exercises powers and functions of fine and imprisonment, not only on those who are represented, but on the whole manufacturing population.

105. If a dispute arises between a compagnon and his master, are disputes between these two parties submitted to the council?—Certainly. An apprentice will not work (I take that case for an example); he is instantly cited by his master before

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before the conseil des prud'hommes; he is punished as they deem fit; they can keep him imprisoned for three days or fine him. The object of this, in a few words, is to take manufacturing questions out of the ordinary tribunals, and create a specific popular tribunal, which manufacturers and workmen have in their hands.

106. And deals with everything connected with manufactures?—Yes, except one thing, which is an important question with which the Committee have been occupied; namely, the question of establishing a general minimum rate of wages. The extent of its functions, as respects wages, is this; that in case of a dispute between master and man, evidence must be given as to the bargain; and then they decide in a conciliatory manner between the parties. But a witness cannot go to this tribunal and say, "The average rate of wages is such, and I insist on receiving it;" for the master says, "No; you bargained with me to work for a certain sum;" and then he calls on this tribunal to enforce this bargain.

107. Who pays the expense of this?—The expense of the establishment is paid by the town, by the municipality; it forms a part and portion of the local budget. The municipality are bound to provide a tribunal or court; this tribunal has its functionaries to summon witnesses and enforce its decrees. The expense of citations and of enforcing decisions is borne by the losing party, or as the council may direct.

108. Does power exist to imprison for three days a wealthy manufacturer?—Yes, certainly; its power is absolute as far as it goes. I have brought hither, from records of tribunals, a number of cases referred. They perhaps will throw more light on the duties that are discharged by this tribunal than any other statement. If the Committee think there will be some interest in knowing what species of cases come before them, I will read some details.

109. In 99 times out of 100, the question must be between what would be called the common working hand-loom weaver, or the compagnon in France, and the master or possessor of the loom?—I will tell you, for instance, a case that occurs; A man sets up a loom for certain patterns; the setting up of a jacquard-loom is a costly affair; a weaver expects that if he sets up a loom to produce a given pattern, that a certain number of pieces of that pattern shall be taken of him. The order is stopped; there is not a demand for so many pieces as he, according to general usage, had a right to expect he should be called on to furnish; the consequence is a squabble between the master manufacturer and the weaver, the master weaver I mean, for the compagnon or journeymen weaver never comes in contact with the manufacturer; the case goes to the conseil des prud'hommes. The first step is the conciliatory part; they endeavour to bring about an understanding and settle the dispute amicably, and if they cannot settle it thus they go to the next stage, which has what may be called an executive and peremptory authority. In order to furnish themselves with evidence as to probabilities in any question of wages, the conseil des prud'hommes cause to be prepared from time to time what they call a mercuriale, which is a rate of wages. Now, though they have not the power to force a man to pay higher wages than he has agreed to pay, in any question of fact where the master and weaver disagree as to a statement, this mercuriale is made a guide to decision. A man says, "I offered to give you 10;" the other says, "No, it was 20;" and if the mercuriale shows 15, and they cannot reconcile the statements of the litigants, the conseil des prud'hommes would take the middle estimate, if it was according to the average rate of wages paid: it cannot force any master, who has contracted to pay a less rate than the average price of wages, and who gives evidence of the contract, to pay the average price of wages. That is the distinction of which I wished the Committee to be possessed.

110. Does the power of the conseil des prud'hommes extend over the whole district where the silk-loom weaving is carried on?—Yes; but different towns have different ordonnances for the establishment of the council. A manufacturer at Lyons will call a weaver before the council, even though the weaver inhabits the country; but a weaver in the country could not call the council at Lyons to settle a dispute between him and his subordinate apprentice. The jurisdiction of the councils is determined by ordonnances.

111. These prices of the mercuriale are the ordinary prices given by manufacturers?—Yes. It will be seen by taking a number, how the different cases are disposed of. The first case I have here is, where a weaver comes and demands from the master 65 centimes per ell, the master declaring he will not pay more than 60;

the conseil des prud'hommes there decides, that inasmuch as the master had not inserted in the book (livret) the price to be paid, he should be compelled to pay the price claimed by the workman. Here is another case, for instance, in which a master comes and declares he has made a bargain with certain journeymen, and they have gone off from their engagement, and subjected him to great loss. This is a case which the conseil des prud'hommes consider of more gravity, and as they cannot visit the parties with more than an imprisonment of three days, which they do not deem sufficient, they send that case to a superior tribunal.

112. Not having power to inflict a severe punishment?—Yes. The complainant having made out his case of loss from the violation of their engagement, the council, if they had thought three days' punishment, or the 100 francs fine, enough, would have visited these men with it; but they think it is a case deserving severer penalties, and they send them to a higher tribunal. Cases there are in which the court of conciliation suggests the reference to a man not a member of the council, and both parties agreeing, the council then declares the arbitration shall have the force of law. Here is a case in which a man has bargained to make a certain quantity of velvet; he brings the certificate of a medical man that his health will suffer if he is compelled to produce it; the bargain is annulled by the council.

113. What period of time are you speaking of now?—The year before last; these are cases I gathered when I was there.

114. Do you know whether the livret is of any particular use to the workmen when they are out of employment?—No doubt it is. Here is a case with respect to the livret; one of the principal manufacturers retains the livret of a workman, to force him to come to some understanding with respect to a question of wages.

115. This is a question between whom?—It is a question between a master manufacturer and a workman.

116. Do you know of any practical use the livret is to the workman himself, when he is out of employment?—It is of very great use; it is difficult, very difficult, for a man who loses his livret to get employment.

117. Do you know when a workman is out of employ, having this livret, he can, generally speaking, borrow upon it from a sort of society they have among themselves, the head of which is called *the mother*; whether he can borrow sufficient, generally speaking, to keep him until he comes into employment again, it being a sort of security to the person who lends him money?—Yes, that is frequently done. The bond of union is strong between the workmen; and they have in most towns of France a rendezvous, where there is a person called a *mère* (mother), and at this rendezvous they often get assistance when out of work. This is another case decided: A man engages to furnish a certain quantity of work; the manufacturer is to provide the pattern; the pattern comes in a bad state; the man, who applies to the conseil des prud'hommes, says he has lost his time to put that pattern in order, and appeals to them to know whether he ought not to receive a higher rate of wages, he having done more than would be required from him by the ordinary usages of trade. They do interfere, and they give 80 francs to the man for his additional labour.

118. And if the man's work is not equal to the pattern, or there is a deficiency, there is a reduction, is there not?—In the same way; that constantly occurs. Then, as to the loss of material, the conseil des prud'hommes regulates by usage what shall be the loss of silk, and what shall be the loss of cotton, in a given manufacture, if a man does not return the weight. It is difficult to arrange many of these matters, but they are brought before the tribunal and settled at little cost, which is the main object. The conseil des prud'hommes, in misunderstandings of this sort, is in the habit of sending deputations from its own body, and of nominating, out of a class called *experts*, persons who visit the locality, and see if work is damaged by the bad state of the loom, or if the compagnon be not really capable of doing the work the master has undertaken, and generally ascertaining by examination the facts in doubtful cases. I should also state to the Committee that they exercise a general power of inspection, but they cannot inspect unless they give two days' notice; and the delay is put on a very reasonable ground, namely, that inasmuch as the manufacturers do not choose to communicate their patterns to others, the intrusion of a manufacturer or weaver, being a councillor, might be very inconvenient and very unjust. Therefore, although they have a power, and their power of visiting is recognised by law, they do not visit unless they give 48 hours' notice to the individual whom they mean to visit, that

that he may take such measures as he thinks fit to shut up from inspection any invention or improvements of his own, to which he does not desire publicity to be given.

119. Are you aware whether the great majority of cases are between the weaver and his compagnon, or between the manufacturing capitalist and the weaver?—There are a greater number of cases between compagnons, apprentices and master weavers, than there are between master weavers and manufacturers, inasmuch as the relative number of persons is greater.

120. An immense majority?—Yes.

121. Have you any cases where there are disputes between the weaver and the manufacturing capitalist?—Many; I have mentioned several where work has been badly done, or where there has been unreasonable delay, or where a man could not carry on his work, as in the case of velvet. Here is a case where a man has falsified his livret; the master discovers it; he brings him before the tribunal, and punishes him for it.

122. Are you aware of any other institution, by means of which the wishes of any particular interest, or the interests of any particular body, are brought before the government?—That is a vast question. There are four great institutions in France connected with mercantile and manufacturing affairs: you have first the tribunals of commerce, which settle all important mercantile questions; then in the great towns you have the chamber of commerce, which is constantly in direct communication with government. It is an instrument of the Minister of Commerce; for in France, the Minister of Commerce forms one of the seven Ministers, and exercises administrative functions of an extensive character. There is in every large town of France a chamber of commerce, and in every secondary town there is what is called a consultative chamber, that does not correspond with the Minister of Commerce, except on occasions. There are a considerable number of consultative chambers; of the chambers of commerce there are only 34. The chambers of commerce are the correspondents and instruments, in fact, of the Minister of Commerce. The consultative chambers do not correspond directly on all occasions habitually with the Minister of Commerce, but they send information on any topic. Both the chambers of commerce and the consultative chambers report to the Minister of government on the state of manufacturing industry. Besides these there is the superior council of commerce in Paris, which may be considered the ministerial council, as the Minister presides over its debates.

123. In how many towns in France do the conseils des prud'hommes exist?—The number is not fixed by law, but they exist in all the manufacturing towns. I ought to mention that no trading merchant can be a member of the conseil des prud'hommes; he must be a master manufacturer, a man who comes in contact in some way or other with the workman.

124. Do you suppose there are 10 or 20 of the conseils des prud'hommes existing in France?—A much greater number.

125. They are established in every commercial town, are they not?—In every manufacturing town.

126. In Paris?—Yes; and Lyons, and Orleans, and Rouen, and Nismes, and Avignon, and many other places; and the decrees that establish them indicate certain modifications with reference to different branches of manufacture; as it is necessary to give a certain influence to particular branches, according to their importance. At Rouen the cotton manufacture has completely the ascendancy, as the silk has at Lyons.

127. As to these persons at Lyons who formed this conseil des prud'hommes, were they chosen by the weavers who had four looms, or is that done in all parts of France?—No; it is settled by special ordonnances. Lyons has been the only town that has been liberalized to that extent.

128. Then it is confined to the walls of Lyons?—To the walls and the manufacturing suburban district of Lyons. I have a list which shows what trades are subjected to them; it contains the principal trades in which artisans are employed.

129. You mean persons working for manufacturers in Lyons?—Yes. Then the council is charged with certain questions of police: for example, to judge and punish every offence tending to trouble, disorder or want of discipline in workshops; every instance in which apprentices fail in the respect they owe to their masters, and so forth. The conseil des prud'hommes may inflict imprisonment for not exceeding three days, leaving the other tribunals full power where a greater punishment should be inflicted. In France the law is exceedingly severe against coalitions or combinations of masters or of men; but those cases of combination

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bination do not come under the cognizance of the conseil des prud'hommes, as they are punishable with greater severity than the conseils des prud'hommes are allowed to apply.

130. Have there been any combinations?—There have been a few; but inasmuch as the punishment the law inflicts for combination is greater than the conseil des prud'hommes is allowed to visit the offender with, of course it is, as I said, taken out of their jurisdiction.

131. Still the council must have the effect of doing away with combination, inasmuch as they settle every dispute?—They do so, but not disputes growing out of general combinations for rise or fall of wages. The great value, after all, of these councils, is the establishing a popular tribunal of conciliation. It was principally on that ground I was desirous of communicating to the Committee the facts I knew on this subject. They are objects of great affection among the weavers. I have again and again attended, I should not say the administration of justice so much as the administration of benevolent feeling. I do think their operation in the conciliatory part is exceedingly valuable. Whenever a case of the slightest interest occurs, there are crowds of workmen present; for workmen depend for much of their happiness on the decisions. It is only now and then masters take the sort of interest that is habitually taken by the workmen. I have often been present when cases have been decided. They have been almost invariably decided to the satisfaction of the parties. I have heard workmen say, "It is right, it is true, it is very just, the man very well deserved it." So that, as a tribunal of conciliation, it is very popular. I have no doubt at all that in France it is of great service.

132. It is on the same footing, but more popular, than the courts of conciliation at Denmark?—No; for, first, all the proceedings in Denmark are in secret; and, secondly, no popular influence at all is exercised or recognised there. When I was in Copenhagen I was desirous of seeing one of the cases judged by the court of conciliation. The Bishop's son, a particular friend of mine, said he had no objection to apply to the parties, to state that, as a stranger, I was desirous of seeing the working of the court. I was allowed to be present at one of the conciliations which took place. But their meetings shut out all publicity; not even the witnesses are present. The principals are always summoned and confronted, and only one witness at a time is admitted. The two principals first state their cases, and then call in the evidence. The witnesses are examined one after another, but there is no publicity in any shape, either in the procedure or in the decrees; and the nomination of the judges is vested entirely with the Crown.

133. Therefore there are cases of all sorts of disputes, manufacturing and otherwise?—Of all sorts; for in Denmark you cannot go to the judicial tribunal until you bring evidence that you have attempted the conciliating tribunal beforehand.

134. Why did you say that Lyons was the only place that had been liberalized so far as to have this conseil des prud'hommes exercising these powers?—The fact is, the state of Lyons caused the government so much alarm, that it was quite necessary to do something to conciliate the workpeople. The spirit of the weavers at Lyons is, and has long been reforming, perhaps republican; and inasmuch as the narrow basis of the representation was a real grievance, a grievance which the government did not think it safe probably to leave unredressed, the extension of the electoral suffrage for the council was determined on.

135. Do you know what is the extent of weavers belonging to this council at Lyons?—I think the number of looms is about 35,000.

136. Have you access to any documents which enable you to know the difference in the prices for several years past?—There has been a decided decline in prices, and the workmen complain exceedingly of the lowering of wages; but I think the decline has been counteracted by manufacturing improvements, and by a decline in prices of many articles of consumption.

137. Is that the compagnon or master weavers?—The result is the same, for the compagnons get half. I can deliver in the last tariff of October 1831, which is the date of the last attempt to fix the price of wages by law.

138. Since the extension of the franchise, if it may be so called, has there been more order or quiet among the workpeople?—No, I do not think there has, but that is probably growing out of other causes. I think that the extension has satisfied the workpeople of the importance of the institution, that it is valued more than before, and it has become more popular as far as respects the quarrels

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between the masters and the men. The workpeople established a newspaper called the *Echo de la Fabrique*, one of whose principal objects was the promulgation of the decrees of the council of prud'hommes. There are, however, many local and political causes which have had much influence on the condition of the Lyonese population.

139. Has there been no attempt of the compagnons to ask to have a voice in choosing these councillors?—No public attempt, which is difficult, as men are not allowed to associate or meet together in France; but the compagnons are very much dissatisfied. Those of the master weavers who are excluded, and who just touch the point of exclusion, naturally feel most discontent; and there is a feeling of dissatisfaction strongest in the proprietors of three looms, and descending downwards to the proprietors of two and one. They all desire to be represented.

140. Can you state whether there are instances of individuals working a single loom?—There are hundreds of such instances. But the master manufacturers prefer treating with the owners of many looms, having as much trouble to come to an understanding with the man who is possessed of one as with a person who has a greater number of looms.

141. The district belonging to Lyons is under control to what extent; what is the jurisdiction?—The number of looms subjected to this regulation are about 35,000.

142. Do you suppose it extends 40 or 50 miles?—Not so much; perhaps you might take an average diameter of five or six miles.

143. Are there not in other parts of France at a greater distance from Lyons, persons with these single looms?—Yes, and there is a conseil des prud'hommes at St. Etienne, where the work is principally carried on among the mountains by a population semi-agricultural and semi-manufacturing; when they bring their work down to the town, they are of course responsible to the conseil des prud'hommes for any damage, or any consequences of misconduct.

144. Can they afford to give their work on more reasonable terms, from being agricultural?—Certainly; there is a constant tendency both at Lyons and at St. Etienne to force the labouring population from the town to the country, for a more economical subsistence. One of the most curious facts connected with the manufacturing industry of France is the universal desire in that country to purchase land. There are an immense number indeed of the artisans or operatives of France who possess a small quantity of land. The savings banks have never had much success, as every little accumulation is almost universally applied to the purchase of a small landed estate; and the subdivision of land is such, that there are no less than seven millions of registrations under the land-tax. I believe in England the whole number of proprietors registered to the land-tax does not exceed 250,000, and the number of registrations paying a direct tax in France is, as I said, between six and seven millions; so that the Committee may conceive to what extent land has been subdivided. There are probably four or five millions of individuals who possess land in France; and the purchase of it is the use which the workman almost invariably makes of his savings. The consequence is that they can live tolerably well, devoting a certain number of hours to agriculture, and a certain number of hours to weaving, and in that way they find employment for a greater number of hours. So heavy is local taxation in the towns in France, and so distressing is the situation of the Lyonese weavers in consequence of what I may call local oppressions, that I am convinced the population can only relieve itself by becoming more agricultural, and diffusing itself in agricultural districts.

145. But at Lyons the particular cause of the distress has been, has it not, the great loans the city has raised?—Not so; the budget of Lyons is only about 100,000 *l.* sterling a year, the population being 165,000.

146. If a tariff existed, could the manufacturer get his work from St. Etienne, and sell it at Lyons?—St. Etienne is not a broad silk, but a riband manufacture.

147. After the tariff was established, was there any other place where goods could be brought in, without being subject to regulation?—The trade of Lyons is so peculiar in its character, that there is no place to compete with it. It is the great seat of all works of taste; its productions are more perfect in consequence of the schools of art; it probably presents in the most extraordinary degree the application of art to the manufactures. You have in Coventry, I believe, only three or four designers living by that profession alone; in Lyons you have as many hundreds. In Lyons there are numbers who are educated in the

arts; a school is opened and gratuitous instruction is given in sculpture, anatomy, botanical painting, mechanics, and the application of the arts to the loom. The manufacturing knowledge there is combined with a study of the fine arts. It is not to be wondered at that the French productions in matters of taste are so superior to the English, when we consider the means taken to make them so. You have hundreds of students. You see a boy of 13 or 14 who shows that he has an artistical taste; he makes his fortune, or that which to him is a little fortune. There are hundreds of artists competing in new designs for manufactures. Lyons in this respect stands alone.

148. What is the date when the tariff was established?—1831.

149. Was that the first established?—This is the first instance of a tariff having been established by the direct authority of the prefect and mayor.

150. Can you tell what was the rate of wages prior to the adoption of that?—It is founded on the then state of wages. Very different rates of wages were paid by the manufacturers. The more respectable manufacturers were desirous of a tariff; they were sacrificed by the competition among manufacturers as the weavers were by the competition for work. They made the experiment; they said, the master-manufacturers, many of them respectable and intelligent men, said, "We will try an experiment, and establish a minimum rate of wages;" and they endeavoured to obtain ample powers to enforce it.

151. Do you know what was the rate of wages immediately preceding it?—In a town like Lyons it is so exceedingly various; but I think the average net rate of wages gained by a compagnon, is about 6 *s.* or 7 *s.* a week.

152. And what alteration did the tariff that was established make in that rate?—The tariff was to recognise the then average rate of wages, and the terms of the tariff did in fact represent the then state of wages.

153. The result would be to make the average the minimum?—Yes, clearly.

154. Which would increase the average subsequently?—It might or might not; it depends of course on the quantity of labour in the market; but the object of the tariff was to recognise the then existing state of wages, and to give to it the force of law.

155. Of course taking the average, and making it a minimum?—The tariff was arranged by a deputation, consisting of a certain number of men who came from the workmen, and a certain number who came from the masters; and they, under sanction of the authorities, decided what the average rate of wages should be, and they established the minimum, declaring that anybody who contravened that rate of wages should be amenable to law.

156. That no one should give less than that?—No one.

157. What was the cause of any dissatisfaction arising out of that?—As I stated before, there were more workmen than could be provided for; the workmen made bargains at lower rates than the tariff, and masters were willing to employ them at lower rates, though not on the terms of the tariff. It was found the law was impotent; the masters who had made it, and who earnestly concurred in it, were benevolent men no doubt, who were desirous of accomplishing the object; but the respectable and honourable manufacturers were sacrificed to the competition of those who would not submit to the tariff, and to the distress of the workmen out of employ.

158. It would have been a gain to them to establish it?—Yes, but they were constantly injured by the intruders who paid less wages than they did, and then they met them in the market with more cheaply produced goods.

159. But the same practice prevailed before, and owing to that practice application was made to this tariff?—No doubt; and all I wish to say is, that there the experiment failed, that it did not diminish but added to the distress; it only increased the acerbity of the feelings of the workmen; the hopes that were excited in their minds were disappointed, and so far from removing their distress, it was accompanied by far greater ultimate suffering.

160. Was there not a scarcity of work prior to the attempt to establish the tariff?—There had been a great deal of suffering; the tariff itself is evidence of the suffering.

161. Did it not arise from the scarcity of work?—As most of the suffering of the labouring class does, it arose from there being a greater number of labourers than there was work for them.

162. Then in fact there was a scarcity of work?—That is always the case where wages fall; and wages never fall except when there is a scarcity of work.

163. Could

163. Could you tell the Committee the rate of wages for the different years?—I think I can furnish a return. There, as here, the great difficulty is to establish any very accurate results: as improvements in machinery and various other elements take place, the production is very much facilitated, and a smaller nominal rate of wages may leave in fact a greater real profit to the weaver. If the Committee ask how much a man received per yard, he will be receiving a much smaller sum than he received formerly; but it may happen, by the improvements in machinery he may make a much greater number of yards in a given time, so on the whole he is not worse off. In France there have been very considerable improvements; so that with a nominal rate of wages lower than the rate of wages paid formerly, the money received may have been more at the end of the week, or capable of purchasing a greater quantity of necessaries.

164. There has been no alteration in the standard of value in France for a great many years?—No; the currency question has had at all events no influence there. I have my own views, which I may state by-and-by, as to the cause of the decline of the rate of wages here and there; but I shall prefer stating them after having heard the evidence.

165. Then, as to this fall in price, you do not ascribe that, as it has been alleged in this country, to any diminution of money or the circulating medium?—There has been no tampering with the currency, as it is called; it is metallic; no paper money has been known among the labouring population; so that of course, when the minimum of a bill issued by the bank of France is 20*l.* sterling, and that bill is not negotiable at 10 miles from Paris, you may well suppose that the condition of the labouring population there, whatever other causes may have been in operation, has not been at all changed by the alteration of the currency.

166. Has there been any alteration in the price of provisions in the same ratio that those wages have fallen?—Yes; but the corn laws of France are rather less severe than in England.

167. Has there been any great increase of taxation?—Considerable; but as to the taxation of France, a large portion of it is direct. In England you have scarcely anything but indirect taxation; it falls on consumption here; in France the largest amount by far received, is received by direct taxation on the land; the land-tax is the great source of revenue. Your customs, for example, are nearly twenty millions sterling a year; the customs of France are only three millions.

168. Is there not a considerable tax on all the produce in the towns?—Yes, which is the octroi.

169. In what way do you suppose, if there was any great increase of debt in France, it would come home to the capitalist manufacturer and the weaver having looms, or would it affect the compagnon?—To a certain extent it would affect the wages of the operative; for if the land be taxed, it is quite certain the produce of the land must be made to pay a portion of it; if the cost of produce of the land be increased, he who consumes it must pay more for it.

170. As regards the house where those men work, is that subject to taxation?—Yes, there is a tax called *portes et fenêtres*, but it is not heavy; it presses lightly on the labourer. The octroi is now a great element of mischief; the legislation is as bad as it can be, for the rate of local taxation increases with the augmentation of the population. A town of 200,000 is taxed more than one of 100,000, and 100,000 more than 50,000; whence it is clear that the increase grows with the increase of the manufacturing population, who have the first claims to relief, instead of being made the subjects of the highest rate of taxation.

171. How does he come at that tax; suppose it increases by a great number of compagnons, who are people of very small means, the tax must fall on the weaver and on the capitalist manufacturer?—It is a local tax that is raised at the gates of the towns; no article can come into the town but by paying the octroi, and it falls wholly on the consumers.

172. Does it affect those who bring silk in for work?—Only eatables and certain other articles, such as building materials, are subject to it. It is not a capitation tax.

173. Are there many manufactories going on outside those gates at Lyons?—Yes, in the neighbouring townships about Lyons, but they do not escape the octroi, though the octroi is much lower. For instance, Lyons being more populous than Vaise, one of the suburbs of Lyons, Vaise pays a lower rate. Then as the population goes on increasing the octroi increases, and then of course another place is created where the octroi is less, and so the population spreads.

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174. Do the manufacturers go out in that way to avoid it?—The workpeople do. Lyons, the octroi being one of the causes, is a place that is undergoing very great changes. Wherever industry, manufacturing industry, is employed for the production of works of manufacturing art, a great town with a great population will give great facilities for it; they must communicate together to produce works of taste, which grow out of the study of pictures and architecture, and other taste-creating elements; so that, happen what will, inasmuch as France is superior in manufacturing works of art, Lyons will be always an important place of manufacture; but as respects some classes of plain goods, Lyons cannot carry on competition with England. Our exports of silk goods to France increase every day: for plain silk goods, particularly for bandanoes, I should think that it has increased 500 per cent. in the last four or five years.

175. Is there any duty on the admission of silk?—About half the duty in England; about 16 per cent. on English silk goods.

176. Has that alteration in the commercial relations between England and France, which has taken place recently, had any effect in depressing the wages of the weavers?—I doubt. What would happen if the restrictions were removed? There would be in France a certain demand for all articles of cheap production; all cotton goods, for instance, which do not require taste; taste is a costly article in this country, there it is a cheap one; and the causes are easily explainable; everything that represents taste is accessible to everybody. The holidays even of the people are spent among sights and visiting beautiful objects; whereas here in England we have no museums open to them, and there is rather a disposition to destroy, than to admire, works of art: in France it is quite the contrary. The result is, the whole tendency of the manufacturing industry of France is towards the regions of taste, and in that part of the field we cannot compete with it.

177. What kind of plain silks do you mean go into France?—Bandanoes. Whenever you require a great production, as in printing, where you make a large quantity of pieces with the same design, I think you have clearly a superiority over them; but in all the articles where you require a constant change, as in the Lyons market, they have a great superiority over you; the houses here that pay the highest price for figures have told me they buy not more than from 10 to 20 pieces of a pattern, and compel the destruction of the pattern. The buying houses in England pay an extra price on the understanding that the pattern shall be destroyed, and that the Lyonese shall not sell more of it to anybody but themselves. I obtained a return of many thousands of pieces of figured goods produced at Lyons, and the average number of pieces produced of a pattern is not 20; which shows with what extraordinary activity the production of new patterns is going on. The mere cost of designs in two or three principal houses in Lyons is 10 per cent. on the whole of their active capital. I have seen returns in some of the principal houses, in which there was an outlay of more than 10 per cent. for the production of designs. Nothing is so important in this country as to direct attention to the means by which art is brought to bear on manufacture.

178. You state that before the tariff was established, great dissatisfaction prevailed among the manufacturers and weavers on account of the unequal prices that were paid?—Yes.

179. In the establishment of that tariff, its object was to equalize the wages?—Yes.

180. In that it failed?—Yes, it did wholly.

181. But after the establishment of the tariff, were the wages more or less unequal than before it was established?—I think they remained pretty much in the same state; the inequalities continued just as they were. Certain intelligent weavers obtained a higher price than the tariff, and certain others could not obtain the tariff price.

182. What was the reason of the dissatisfaction increasing?—The working people thinking they had the law on their side became outrageous, and their case was really a very cruel one, since the government had sanctioned the tariff, and had given those people good ground of complaint, inasmuch as a great number of the masters were giving lower wages, and others were working lower than the tariff, which had become obligatory in as far as legal recognition could make it so.

183. You state the dissatisfaction arose from a transgression of the law, or a non-observance of it?—I said that the grievances of the working people were very much increased when they, having obtained the legislative interference to recognise

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recognise a certain state of wages, had not only to complain of the masters who were giving lower rate of wages, but of the government, which they fancied ought to have protected them, but which did not or would not, or could not. They felt themselves deeply injured.

184. It was an infraction proceeding from the more necessitous part of themselves?—No doubt; it is impossible that the wages could have fallen unless some weaver had chosen to offer himself at a lower rate of wages.

185. Then the infraction of the law was complained of as being caused by the manufacturer?—By both manufacturer and workman; it was complained of on two sides; the managing weavers, who found that weavers were disposed to work at lower terms than were established, and the masters, who found the manufacturers were disposed to give lower wages: on both sides there were complaints.

186. Did the government take a part and sanction the masters?—The act of the central government was this: believing that the establishment of the tariff had very much embittered the condition of the weavers, they summoned the prefect to Paris, who had authorized the tariff. I do not see that he had exceeded his functions in doing so, as a prefect; but when the tariff produced these consequences I have described the ministry attributed them to him, and he was displaced, and has never been admitted to a public employment since.

187. Was the tariff before, or after the Revolution of 1831?—Immediately succeeding: an attempt was made to set it aside; the people turned out; then they obtained possession of the town, standing on their legal position that they had a right to higher wages.

188. Were the masters, part of them, divided as to abandoning the tariff, or were they all agreed that it should have no longer existence?—It fell through, as a matter of course, the moment it lost its legal authority.

189. Then you have reason to think that the state of things exists there now pretty much, as to the masters paying different rates of wages; that there is inequality?—Yes, no doubt; and there is a great deal of distress in consequence.

190. Are there attempts made by the compagnons or weavers, by intimidation, to get the masters to pay more?—No, not now, because the working people were so completely crushed by the military interference that the town is scarcely to be recognised. I was there after the first insurrection. I saw almost all the leaders, and they were very remarkably intelligent men; they were then in a state of great excitement. When I was at Lyons last, since the military events which subdued them, the population appeared completely broken down and despairing.

The following letter from the Rev. Mr. Boyle was directed to be inserted as part of the Minutes:

" My dear Sir, Cadder, 17 March 1835.

" Some time ago you stated to me, how advantageous it would be to the weavers to have an abridgment of their evidence for the use of Members of Parliament. Since that time I have almost promised to Mr. George Allan and Mr. W. Thomson to perform that task. As you have again brought their case before the House, that work, if it is to be done, must be performed without delay. There are two ways of doing it: the easier one will be to give a precis of each witness's statement; the more difficult but more effectual one, will be to give a comprehensive, and if possible a luminous view of the whole evidence, arranged into topics and supported by extracts from the different statements; something, in short, like the special pleadings of a barrister. It might be brought out as a pamphlet of the size of your own; but as few comparatively could purchase it; the expense would be about 20 *l.* Or it might be brought out in twopenny parts, which would probably sell well, thus covering the outlay and affording besides any number of copies for presentation to the Members of either House of Legislature. This would have the farther advantage of keeping the subject constantly before both of their Houses and the country at large.

" The whole might form a letter or a series of letters, to yourself, as Chairman of the Committee. Any fresh evidence might be given as a second part, in the same manner. And failing any other more competent person, I shall undertake the task, and that as soon as authorized. And could you give me any idea when the final Report of the Committee for this session would be given in, it could be

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so managed as to be finished a week or two previously, so as to make a fresher and deeper impression on the House.

"May I, therefore, respectfully beg to know, at your earliest convenience, your pleasure in the matter? Should you approve of my plan, you can instruct the weavers of the same, in order to secure an extensive circulation of the work. Should you disapprove, say so frankly; I have no particular anxiety for the work."

Martis, 24° die Martii, 1835.

JOHN MAXWELL, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

THE Chairman reported that he had received the following communications:

(Extract.)

24 March 1835.

IF you please, I will suggest a few questions, which might be put to opponents in some situations before your Honourable Committee.

If an unbeliever in the practicability of a Board, he might be asked,—If a piece of plain cloth were upon this table, could you not tell how many hanks of warp and weft it contains, by counting and measuring the same? and if you were told the wages paid for the weaving, you could tell how many hanks the weaver had woven for 1 *s.* or 1 *d.* If you had a series of such prices and fabrics from the various manufactories in the kingdom, or an account of them, could you not add them together and divide them by the gross number, to make an average? When you had made such average, could you not enjoin every manufacturer to pay such average, at least for every piece of such kind that he may hereafter manufacture? For such masters as are unskilled in calculations, could not such tables be made as would to a certainty determine the number of hanks in his cloth, without his being obliged to calculate? If you can do thus for one species of cloth, cannot you do it for 1,000?

Suppose you are manufacturing goods at Preston, and another gentleman is making the same kind of goods at Leyland, and you at Preston are giving 1 *s.* a cut more than he is at Leyland, are you not upon very unequal terms as it respects the cost of your goods? and would not yourself and the weaver at Leyland be mutually benefited if the Leyland manufacturer were compelled to pay the same wages as yourself?

If you have a stock of goods, and wages drop, what effect has it upon the value of your stock? what would be the effect on the same from a rise in wages if the same were universal and promised to be permanent?

If there occur a rise in the price of cotton, and it steadily keeps on advancing, is not the direct tendency to cause goods to rise in the market? if not immediately, does it not ultimately? Then why should you not be able to get up the prices of your goods when wages rise, and the permanency of that rise is secured by law?

To an enemy on free-trade principles,—Do you think the weaver earns sufficient wages in these times? can the weaver protect himself from further reductions? have not combinations amongst the operatives and solemn agreements by the employers been tried and proved insufficient?

If the weaver cannot protect himself, and the master will not, because in all such cases, when he has agreed to resist any further reductions, some one has broken the compact, ought not the law be interposed for the protection of both?

Ought competition to be permitted in every case to proceed without the restraint of the law, even to the destruction or the extinction of a branch of industry and the beggary of its operatives?

Is there any rule in legislation without an exception; and is not the hand-loom weaver's case one in which an exception should be made, seeing it is working its own extinction, and has produced, by unlimited competition, the beggary of its operatives?

If the law had restrained the further reduction of wages when they were 100 per cent. higher than they are at this time, would the weavers have been in a better or worse condition than they are at present?

Seeing

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Seeing that our exports of cloth manufactures are 14 parts and the home consumption of the same 12 parts in 26, or $\frac{6}{13}$ths of the goods manufactured are consumed at home; if that be the case, and wages were to be raised 100 per cent., what part of our foreign trade would it cut off, and what part would remain, and would not the weaver be as well situated, and even better, that he should have an increase of wages with a diminished labour in a corresponding ratio, than an increase of labour and a diminution of wages in a corresponding ratio?

Do you remember what part or portion of our export trade is with our own colonies, in which colonies we can exclude the manufactures of other nations?

If the system of reducing wages be continued, what will be the ultimate effect?

Referring to the moderate taxation of other countries with which we have to compete in manufacturing, have you read the fable of the Frog and the Ox. Have we not almost burst ourselves by endeavouring to swell our trade with the inflated notions of unlimited competition, or, in other words, with a spurious political economy?

If an opponent on machinery principles,—Do not those who work at power-looms earn more wages than the hand-loom weavers?

If to protect hand-loom labour, and cause it to rise, would be to give a premium to power-looms, and if the power affords more wages than the hand-loom, is it not conferring a benefit on society to accelerate the universal adoption of the power-loom, by keeping up or raising the price of hand-loom labour?

In 1814 the power-loom was scarcely known, and now there are 100,000. If in 1814 the same quantity of cloth had been produced as in 1834, do you think a market could have been found for the same? If it could not, then has not the power-loom cloth found a market for itself?

Is not power and hand-loom cloth in a great measure on a different footing as to its uses and applications? Are not there certain peculiarities and advantages in both kind of looms which fit them more especially for distinct species of work? If so, may not the hand-loom be very safely protected? Are not a great part of exported goods the produce of the power-loom?

Are not a great part of our home-consumed goods those of the hand-loom, such as stripes, check, lenos, books, mulls, jacconets, nainsooks, cambrics, figured goods, shawls, and all light fancy articles, which are either the standard fabrics or the mere calls of fashion, to execute which the power-loom would be unable, either from the expense attending the preparatory mechanism, which might be thrown away as useless before it had paid half its cost, or that because delicacy of treatment, and the operation of the mind, is required to conduct its processes?

Dear Sir,—The foregoing are questions which have crossed my mind, and if you can make any use of them, I shall feel very proud.

Hoping you will excuse the liberty I have taken in suggesting them, and that if I can in any way render any assistance, you will command the same from

Sir, your most obedient servant,

John Maxwell, Esq., M.P. *James Makin.*

P.S.—Mr. Oastler is holding a meeting this evening on the Factory business in the theatre. I wrote to Mr. Bolling, after which I received his favour of the 11th, and thank him for it. My wish is, that a final and amicable termination of the question may be soon made.

Sir, Glen, Greenock, March 16, 1835.

Observing from the newspapers that you are about to resume your benevolent exertions in favour of the hand-loom weavers, I conceive it a point of duty to put you in possession of the undernoted circumstance; premising that it is with no view whatever to produce any relaxation of your favourable continuance of this case.

In the course of investigations into the artificial and conventional drinking usages in Scotland, the following has been reported to me:—

"Universal in the west of Scotland.

"*Harness Tying.*—This is a particular kind of mounting for raised or flowered work. On this occasion the weaver collects a number of his neighbours and

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acquaintances to assist him; and as there is no payment for this kind of work, a treat of bread and cheese, and plenty of whiskey, is the acknowledgment. As the weaver's time is precious, this usage takes place at night, and the consequence of this, and of reciprocity perhaps from some of the party, is, that some are not in a capacity for working next day."

This usage has been found a principal impediment to weavers joining the temperance societies, and a principal ground of those who have once joined withdrawing.

We have made some little progress in breaking up some of those usages in this quarter, by direct association against them. What chiefly hinders our advance is the ignorance of influential persons of the existence of the drinking usages, and of their connexion with and power upon inebriation.

If, upon satisfying yourself on this point, you could expostulate a little on the subject with those concerned, I have no doubt the trade would be better able, by disuse of these, and consequent amended circumstances, to speak with their employers about wages; but an inebriate class is at the mercy of capital, without the usual moral helpers that sobriety would afford.

Have the goodness to observe, that this usage in the meantime is so imperative that one individual dare not abandon it. We have, however, succeeded in procuring the abrogation of more inveterate usages by combination.

I am, Sir, with great regard, your very obedient humble servant,

John Dunlop.

John Maxwell, Esq. M.P.

Mr. *John Marshall,* called in; and Examined.

Mr. *John Marshall.*

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191. THE Committee understand that you have devoted some time to statistical inquiry?—I have.

192. In the course of that inquiry, has your attention been at all directed to the condition of the hand-loom weavers?—It has.

193. What do you consider their condition to be at the present time, in comparison with their condition in former periods, say 40, 30, or 20 years ago, and in comparison with the condition of those employed in other branches of manufactures and agriculture?—I have found their condition to be very bad, as well by some personal acquaintance with their condition, as by an examination of all the evidence that has been given before Committees of the House of Commons within the last 10 or 15 years. I find that they have been getting progressively worse in condition since 1793, but more uniformly so since the year 1816, and worse than any other class of labourers, except the agricultural labourers in some districts.

194. Have you been led to any conclusion with regard to the causes of the increased privation which now prevails among the hand-loom weavers?—I assign the cause mainly to the uncontrolled and extended application of mechanical power; that is the first great cause of the depression. It appears from some conclusions to which I have been recently led, deduced from the census of 1831, which is the most amplified we have ever had, and different in character from any preceding Return, inasmuch as it enables us to come to conclusions from which we were heretofore precluded by any official Return, but which leads only to the same results to which I had been previously led, by a most elaborate inquiry into the circumstances and condition of the country at large, in a way to enable me to arrive at approximately just conclusions in regard to the proportion of the population engaged in or dependant upon each great branch of production or occupation for subsistence. The census of 1831 confirms the conclusions to which I had been led by that inquiry, which had no reference to and was formed in ignorance of what that Return would lead to; but it now proves that the extended application of machinery has annihilated all the domestic industry or domestic manufacture which used to prevail among at least from 800,000 to 1,000,000 of families, and which were carried on, not to a large extent, but to such an extent as supplied all the domestic comforts of the family.

195. Do you mean 800,000 families or 800,000 persons?—Families; domestic manufacture used to pervade every labourer's cottage, every farm-house, and the habitations of the handicraftsmen. My own experience confirms the conclusion

at which I have arrived, as far as the midland counties were concerned; and I think I may say it was general over all Great Britain.

196. You apply this to the making of lace, and so on?—Spinning of wool and flax, before the introduction of the cotton manufacture; the making of lace was confined to, comparatively speaking, a limited district in Bucks, &c.

197. That is to say, the spinning by the women, for their husbands afterwards to work up?—Not exactly so; the labourers' families were more generally employed in carding and spinning of wool, given out by the shopkeepers of the villages; and the yarn, after taken back by them in exchange for the articles of the shop, passed into other hands to be wove; the farm-houses and the houses of the handicraftsmen, such as the smiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, and persons of that description, were more generally employed in the spinning of flax, the yarn of which they afterwards sent to be wove, some for sale and some for domestic use. It will be found, on pursuing this inquiry, that going back 40 years the three counties of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk were to England what the great district of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire is at this time; it was the great manufacturing district of the kingdom, which then supplied the metropolis with worsted and linen manufactures to a very large extent. The city of Norwich, as is the case at the present day upon a more extended scale, supplied the finer description of fabrics, and Hampshire particularly, within the recollection of persons still carrying on business in London, used to supply entirely certain species of fabrics, such as striped linens and productions of that kind. The west of England, it is too well known to be necessary for me to state, was another manufacturing district for exchange, and Exeter particularly was a large exporting town of manufactures.

198. Were these manufactures conducted in private houses by individuals?—The carding, spinning and winding was carried on in the private houses; and weaving was, to some trifling extent, a factory operation. Four, six, eight and ten looms were sometimes found collected together; occasionally a single loom was to be found, but it was no uncommon thing to find six, eight, or ten looms concentrated.

199. And were those parties who had the looms subordinate to the people who spun or prepared the yarn, or were they connected with them?—In some cases they were, and in others not: to the farmers more particularly they were weavers for hire. The yarn used to be sent from the farm-houses and houses of the handicraftsmen, and persons above the common class of labourers. The yarn was sent to the weavers and returned in cloth, and paid for at so much per yard or piece.

200. That was more especially the case with woollen cloth, was it not?—Not so much with woollen yarn as with linen yarn; the woollen yarn passed generally into the hands of the village shopkeepers, and from them through dealers into the West Riding of Yorkshire, and the west of England, while the linen was gene rally wove and bleached in the villages where spun.

201. Then the producer of the wool and flax sent that article, after its being spun by the females of the house, to have it wove for his own use; or was there another party came in as a sort of manufacturer?—The flax-grower prepared the flax for sale to the shopkeepers of the towns and villages, of whom it was bought by the matrons of the farmers and handicraftsmen, and the wool went through the hands of dealers and sorters before it came into the hands of the shopkeepers to be given out for spinning; the linen was manufactured much for domestic use and local consumption, but both linen and worsted fabrics were articles of exchange to a very great extent; but being more in small quantities, the operations were not so perceptible as the exchange of manufactures are at the present time, when the whole operation is concentrated in one great district, and when it all passes through the hands of dealers.

202. But with reference to the case of Exeter, that seems to have been something in the nature of a depôt where these goods were sold?—It was so for the manufactures of the district of the west of England, which used to extend over a large part of the south of Wiltshire, a large portion of Somerset, and a large portion of Devonshire; for this district Exeter may be considered as having been the outport for the export and transit of its surplus productions.

203. What was not consumed within the district?—Just so; Spain particularly at one period was in the habit of drawing large supplies of woollens from Exeter; but, independent of the export, large supplies came to London, as the great market of exchange.

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204. Were there cloth halls, and places of that kind, to which these goods were carried by the farmers?—That I cannot speak to distinctly, but I think my recollection serves me sufficiently to enable me to state, that in the inquiry on the state of the woollen trade, before a Committee of the Lords, four or five sessions since, in 1829 or 1830, this question was put, and to the best of my recollection the answer went to show that there never had been any halls or places of public resort in the west of England similar to those which I believe do still or did prevail till recently in Leeds and the north of England. The manufacture also consisted rather of stuffs than of cloths; woollen or worsted stuffs, under the denomination of serges, tammies, camlets, &c., which are now superseded by the lighter fabric of cotton.

205. Do you think that the great alteration which has taken place has been the means of placing the artisan more completely in a state of dependence upon the manufacturer?—It has so, so far as my own experience goes. My own knowledge of the fact embraces an extensive district in the midland counties, in which I can look back upon the habitations of 50 families, whom I knew as agricultural labourers 35 or 40 years ago, living in great comfort, the mother and children of the family exchanging the produce of their labour at the wheel to the extent of 2 *s.*, 3 *s.*, 4 *s.*, or 5 *s.* a week, all of which operation is now annihilated; and owing to its absence it is that so much privation prevails among the farm labourers in certain districts; and it will be seen, on a close investigation, that there is a greater pressure of poor-rates in all those districts where manufacturing operations were more extensively carried on, as in certain parts of Wiltshire and Hampshire, and more particularly the counties of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, are found to present a far greater pressure of parochial assessment than any other district in the kingdom, notwithstanding their superior advantages in an agricultural point of view, in having the benefit of the London market.

206. Are you aware whether the same state of things exists in those parts of Yorkshire and in Scotland where the manufacturers have now established themselves on a new system?—I am not personally so familiar with the north as I am with other parts of Great Britain, but the explanation which I have given of the cause of the prevailing distress of the hand-loom weavers and some agricultural labourers, is applicable, with some variation in degree, to the whole kingdom.

207. Then you ascribe to the application of steam to manufacturing purposes, and the greater quantity of fuel to be found in the north of England, the transfer of that description of industry?—Just so; and hence the first great cause of the relatively worse condition of the hand-loom weavers than any class of labourers, save and except the agricultural labourers in those districts where the extinction of this domestic industry has placed them in a worse position than the agricultural labourers in districts not so much affected by it.

208. Then you ascribe to that cause the lower rate of wages given in the west of England to an agricultural labourer than is given in the north of England, Northumberland for instance?—The difference which now prevails in the rate of remuneration for agricultural labour in different parts of the kingdom does not arise exclusively from the causes to which I have adverted; going back to a period prior to the introduction and expansion of the cotton manufacture, great variation in the remuneration given for agricultural labour prevailed. In districts remote from market, and without the facility of conveyance that now prevails, lower prices of produce would prevail, and lower rates of money wages would suffice to obtain the same subsistence and comfort as where higher prices were obtained, and higher wages given: the higher rate of wages that may be given to agricultural labourers in Northumberland may readily be accounted for by the great demand which there must be in that district for labour in maritime and mining employments; other special causes may be assigned to other districts to account for differences in the remuneration for agricultural labour. I am not so conversant with the difference in the rate of remuneration for agricultural labourers, as I am satisfied of the effect which the annihilation of domestic manufactures has occasioned.

209. You are not aware of the relative difference in the price of agricultural labour?—Not sufficiently so as to justify me in speaking confidently upon the subject.

210. You ascribe the increase of poor-rates in some degree, if not altogether, to these people having lost that mode of employment for their wives and children which they previously had in spinning, &c.?—I do; inasmuch as I find that the parochial

parochial assessments press more heavily in all those districts where domestic manufactures more extensively prevailed, which leaves no doubt on my mind that in those districts an excess of population has been left for agricultural pursuits; at all events, it is an indisputable fact that the parochial rates do so press in all those districts where domestic manufactures were more general.

211. Then the class of persons who were the weavers in these districts are now totally without employ?—Without manufacturing employ.

212. Or a few employed by farmers in some parts of England?—Exceedingly few, if any. Nor is this all, for another important effect has resulted, not only in relation to the question of manufacture, but in reference to the relations of society generally. One hundred thousand farm-houses at least, which were formerly in the habit of keeping two or three female servants, holding in view filling up their leisure time at the spinning-wheel in the absence of the other domestic duties of the establishment, now keep only one female servant; hence an excess of female as well as of male labour, and this has led to an entire change in the domestic habits of the British farmer. In farm-houses where two, three or four male servants were formerly kept in the house, one or two only are now kept. It was also the practice of the farmer to victual the greater part if not the whole of his labourers, out-door as well as domestic, while now the labourer is thrown wholly for subsistence upon his money wages. These changes have produced a very sensible effect upon the general relations of society, independently of the bare question of the annihilation of all domestic manufacturing operations.

213. What counties do you particularly refer to?—The change is general over all Great Britain.

214. Are you prepared to suggest to the Committee any measure which you think would afford essential relief to the hand-loom weavers without essentially affecting other existing interests?—I am quite prepared to submit to the Committee such a developement of remedies as must prove satisfactory, if the Committee will hear me through. It will take me some time to do so; and I therefore beg leave to submit, with all possible respect to the Committee, that if there is any question the Committee would previously put, to confirm the necessity of something being done, I shall be happy to answer it; or I will meet the question immediately, if it is more agreeable to the Committee that I should do so.

215. Are you prepared to suggest to the Committee any measure which you think would afford any essential relief to the hand-loom weavers, without essentially affecting other existing interests?—I have, in answer to a question previously put to me, stated the cause of the distress of the hand-loom weavers to have mainly resulted from the uncontrolled and extended application of mechanical power; and, by permission of the Committee, before I proceed to propose the remedy for the evil thus inflicted, I will recapitulate and show, somewhat more in detail, the way in which scientific and mechanical power has operated to place the hand-loom weavers in their present unhappy condition. The first effect was, as I have before stated, to gradually annihilate all domestic manufacture in the rural districts, which led to a great migration of the population from those districts to the metropolis, and the manufacturing district of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. Since the commencement of the present century, this migration has thrown into the metropolis an increase of population exceeding 600,000 beyond the excess of births over deaths, and upwards of 550,000 into the manufacturing district of the North; and as the migration took place at ages approaching maturity, it has further led to a relatively greater increase of births in the manufacturing districts than in other parts of the kingdom. Hence a solution to the otherwise seeming extraordinary increase in the population both of the metropolis and of the manufacturing district of Lancashire and the West Riding, which has more than doubled since the commencement of the present century; and since the commencement of the preceding century the population of Lancashire has increased eight-fold, and that of the West Riding four-fold. Thus, notwithstanding the abundant employment which the first application of steam-power and mechanical improvements in spinning of cotton gave to weavers in the Lancashire district, the large extraneous supply of labour which the rural districts threw into Lancashire soon became equal to, and even to exceed the demand, except at greatly reduced rates. And since the application of steam-power to weaving, in 1814, the ascendancy of the employer over the employed has become such, as to cause the same labour, in a certain kind of weaving, to be performed for 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.*, for which, on an average of the five years, 1798 to 1802, 15*s.*

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15 *s.* was paid, and previous to 1798, a much higher price. In other branches of weaving, 135 *l.* is now only distributed for the same labour among the same number of persons as in 1814 received 300 *l.*; such has been the effect of the extended application of machinery more immediately in relation to the hand-loom weavers in the district of concentrated manufacture, while, by its annihilation of all the domestic operations of carding, spinning, weaving, &c. in the rural districts, it has led to an increase of parochial taxation of from 2,000,000 *l.* to upwards of 8,000,000 *l.* in amount per annum; and notwithstanding the extraordinary and unparalleled increase of the cotton manufacture since 1792, from 30,000,000 to 300,000,000 lbs. per annum, and the imposing effect which it produces in its concentrated district of action, there are fewer persons, in the aggregate of Great Britain, now deriving subsistence from manufacturing labour than there were 40 years ago: the application of steam-power, in conjunction with various mechanical contrivances, to manufacturing purposes, having led to the great changes in the relations of the British community just previously described, and, by the influx of labourers from the rural into the manufacturing districts, to the serious depression in the remuneration for weaving. A leading principle in the remedy for the evils thus produced will be, to bring steam-power under the control of revenue, and that to a large extent; but as the adoption of such a measure would be to enhance the cost of the productions of steam-power, which at present, as far as the external consumption is concerned, find a difficulty in realizing their cost at the present low rates, some other means must be resorted to to justify the measure of laying a heavy tax on mechanical power. As far as the proposition applies to the internal interests of the country, it would resolve itself into a commutation merely, operating in favour of the hand-loom weaver in a twofold degree; for if, by transferring any given amount, say 5,000,000 *l.* per annum, of tax on commodities, such as sugar, tea, soap, &c. to an equal amount of tax on mechanical power, that would place the articles of consumption so much more within the reach of the weaver in common with all other labourers, while the increased cost of mechanical productions which the tax on machinery would occasion would enhance the value of the labour of the hand-loom weaver in nearly an equal ratio, while the enlarged consumption of all articles of subsistence and comfort to which the adoption of such a measure would lead could not fail to renovate all the drooping interests of the country, except so far as it would probably, in some measure, be counteracted by the effects which an increased cost of mechanical productions would occasion on the external transactions of the country, amounting, as the mechanical productions exported do, to near 30,000,000 *l.* value per annum. Some countervailing measure must be resorted to to compensate for the increased cost of those productions consequent on the proposed tax on mechanical power; the required compensation for the external operation may be obtained by extending the principle of commutation of duties with the several nations of the world; by an arrangement of this kind, the corn-law question, which has agitated the country more or less every Session of Parliament during the last 20 years, and which must continue to do so, until adjusted on some such principle as I am about to propose, under which it may be made the means of justifying a very large amount of revenue being annually drawn from steam-power, and constitute a large amount in exchange for the products of British labour exported, without affecting the value of corn of internal growth in anything like the degree in which the landed proprietor and the agricultural producers and labourers would be benefited by the general prosperity which must inevitably ensue, not only to the United Kingdom, but to all countries with which the proposed principle of intercourse is adopted. The proposed principle of commutation is this: for the several countries of the world with which we have intercourse to levy an export duty upon the articles which Great Britain will receive from them; Great Britain agreeing to admit such products duty-free on condition of British products being admitted into those respective countries duty-free, or at such modified rates of duty as may be requisite for statistical purposes only. Suppose, by way of example, it is proposed to Prussia to admit 1,000,000 quarters, or any number of quarters, of wheat into Great Britain duty-free, Prussia having levied a duty equal to 15 *s.* or 20 *s.* per quarter thereon on exportation, on condition of all articles imported into Prussia direct from the United Kingdom being admitted duty-free; such being the principle of commutation agreed upon, it will be seen that the duty levied on the export of wheat, as well as the wheat itself, resolves itself into good exchangeable value for the British products exported, while the sale of those products will be

be greatly facilitated by the exemption of those inordinate rates of duty which at present more or less prevail in all countries; while further, the export duty to be levied on grain would operate as such a salutary check on excess of supply, as to prevent any undue depression on the corn of internal growth. I have thus far illustrated the principle of commutation in reference to Prussia and to corn; but the principle is applicable to all productions as well as corn, and to all countries as well as Prussia; and such a principle of commutation established, it will be seen that an internal commutation of taxation, from commodities to mechanical power, to the amount of 5,000,000 *l.*, 6,000,000 *l.* or more per annum, is at once justifiable; but it may reasonably be doubted whether Prussia would immediately or readily accede to such a principle of commutation. I myself do not believe she would, nor do I think that Russia would, nor some other countries which I could name; I am nevertheless prepared to direct the attention of the Committee to such other countries as will readily accede to the proposition, and they to such an extent as to justify the Committee in its adoption without delay.

215*. When you contemplate the improvement of the condition of that part of the working class which comes into competition with machinery, do you make amends, by an improvement in the home trade, for any defect that might be produced on the foreign trade in consequence of taxing an article for exportation?—As the tax proposed on machinery is a commutation for taxes on commodities, and not an additional impost, it would not fail to operate advantageously for all interests and to all classes of the community, and especially so to the hand-loom weavers, inasmuch as I understand that the present low rate of hand-loom weaving is already felt as competing with the power-loom: whatever tax, therefore, is transferred to mechanical power, must operate as a premium to the hand-loom weaver, while the consumers of power-loom productions have their equivalent in the reduced rates of duties commuted.

216. Do you contemplate no evil effect in the enhanced price of goods made by machinery being affected in rival markets by the freedom from that taxation which other countries would still have which employed machinery of the same kind?—As the proposition which I have made is based throughout on the fairest possible principle of commutation, whatever disadvantage may *primâ facie* present itself on one side, is fully counterbalanced on the other; it is based on principles of the purest reciprocity, and on full investigation will prove void of all objection; the boon which Great Britain will offer in the admission of foreign products duty-free, with an export duty, will be too great long to remain an obstacle to obtaining all the conditions required to justify the proposed transfer of tax to mechanical power.

217. You mean of all the raw products of any country?—The principle will be applicable to all products, and to all countries, as circumstances may recommend, and in proportion as terms may be agreed on; and, though propositions so novel may not recommend themselves with all the force of reason in the first instance, when fully examined, they will prove to be susceptible of being reduced to practice to the satisfaction of all parties.

218. It is believed that there are some parts of France and Germany which export goods made by machinery to South America; would it not be necessary that these countries should in some way or other become a party to the system of taxing mechanical power?—I can see no necessity for regarding France and Germany or any other country as a party to the proposition for taxing mechanical power in the way I have proposed; I propose giving a boon for the exemption of the heavy imposts levied on British productions; this exemption would apply to products carried in British ships or ships of the country only, and other countries must be prepared to offer a corresponding boon before they obtain the same exemption of impost upon their productions of mechanical power, admitting they have such productions to found external transactions upon; but it is a mistake to suppose that as regards all the great, substantial, and useful articles of value in exchange, Great Britain has anything to fear from competition, in the strict sense of that word; it is inordinate fiscal imposts, and not the competition of either local advantage, ingenuity or labour, that counteracts the interest of the British merchant in the several markets of the world; some trifling articles, such as the artificial flowers, and ribands of France, and toys of Germany, may claim a priority over similar articles made in England; but in all the solid and substantial products of utility Great Britain is too decidedly pre-eminent to be affected by competition, in the legitimate sense of that word.

 219. Velvets?—

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219. Velvets?—French, German and Italian velvets may all be entitled to pre-eminence over velvets made in England, and regarded also as an article of high appreciation; but velvets are comparatively trifling in extent.

220. And figured silks?—And figured silks; but they are not likely to become articles to constitute a question of competition, nor at all affect the principle which I have laid down.

221. Are you aware what sort of duties are levied in South America upon the export of precious metals?—I am not prepared to answer that question specifically to my own satisfaction; I am not sufficiently conversant with the precise rates, but I believe they are about 25 per cent.

222. Will you state to the Committee whether you are aware of the Americans being successful competitors with our manufacturers?—The Americans will probably become competitors in fabrics, on the other hand, of a very low description: they have already made some shipments of a very low description of cotton fabrics to South America.

223. Have you understood they have interfered at all with our shipments there?—I do not know of any particular case in which they have interfered, but knowing that shipments of coarse cotton fabrics have been made from North to South America, it is very probable that those coarse fabrics have superseded, in some degree, the sale of the better fabrics of England.

224. Then of course you, not knowing that fact, cannot be aware they have undersold our manufacturers?—I do not know of any particular case of underselling, but I can readily conceive, from what I know of the adventuring spirit of the Americans, that such a thing is very probable; but it is another question whether such interference has been either materially prejudicial to Great Britain, or beneficial to America; nor, be it as it may, will it weigh a feather in the scale, under the regulations which Great Britain has it in her power to establish.

225. Are you aware of American yarns having been imported into this country?—I am aware that some yarns have been introduced, but not to any great extent; if they had, they must have shown themselves in a way that I could not have overlooked them; nor is it an object of any importance.

226. In taxing mechanical power, do you include power-looms only, or every description of mechanical power?—I propose bringing the whole mechanical power of the kingdom under the cognizance of the Revenue, as well for statistical data to legislate upon, as to render it contributory; the mode and degree of contribution will be matter for more minute and deliberate investigation when the adoption of the principle is resolved upon.

227. The business of cotton-spinning having grown up in this country, and not interfered with manual labour, will you tell the Committee whether you think that a just object for taxation?—I have stated, in answer to a previous question, that the cotton manufacture may be regarded as a creation since the close of the American war in 1785–86. Since the eight years 1791–98, the importation of cotton wool has increased from 27,600,000 lbs. annually, to 326,000,000 lbs. in 1834; but it is a fatal notion to entertain, that it has not interfered with manual labour; I have shown that cotton fabrics have superseded the worsted and linen fabrics that were universally worn 40 years ago, and since that time annihilated the domestic manufacture, which then prevailed in 800,000 to 1,000,000 families, and changed the social relations of the entire agricultural and rural population of the kingdom, and that, notwithstanding the extraordinary and unparalleled extension of the cotton manufacture, and some increase in the woollen, linen, and silk manufactures, there are now fewer persons deriving subsistence from manufacturing employment than there were 40 years ago.

228. Are you aware that, notwithstanding a great deal of the woollen manufacture being superseded by cotton, the price of sheep's wool is still very high?—I am perfectly aware of the high price of wool at the present time compared with the price during the years 1826–29, and the same observation applies to the cotton wool also, which has risen from 5*d.* to 9*d.* or 10*d.* per pound since 1829–30.

229. Are you aware that the cotton manufacture has taken such root in the United States of America, that they consume about 200,000 bales a year?—I am so aware; and hence the imperativeness of Great Britain not attaching too great an importance to the cotton manufacture, nor regarding it either as an individual or permanent operation, but as one liable some day or other to involve the aggregate interests of the country in one common disaster, unless some commensurate arrangements are timely made to avert it. On examination of the sources of supply,

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supply, it will be seen that Great Britain draws more than three-fourths of the supply of raw material for her cotton manufacture from the United States of North America; if, therefore, the United States should again resort to the measure of suspending all external intercourse, as they did in 1807–8, and again in 1813–14, I implore the Committee to reflect, while they ask themselves what the condition of the 2,000,000 of people will be, now concentrated in the manufacturing district of Lancashire and the West Riding of York, and what effect the cessation of supply of raw material will have upon the interests of the country at large; the Committee cannot fail to see, that such a proceeding on the part of the United States would threaten a convulsion in Great Britain, more fearful and disastrous than any which has hitherto occurred, and that the liability increases in a ratio proportionate to the increasing magnitude of the operation. It may be true, that such a proceeding on the part of the United States does not at this moment present itself as a probable occurrence, but what has happened once may happen again, and it is far from being an impossible case, or one that may not occur within 12 months, and is a contingency which every consideration of self-interest, and every honourable principle of national character, calls upon Great Britain timely and duly to provide against.

230. Are you aware that the Americans export a very large quantity of cotton manufacture, called *domestics*, to South America?—I am aware that they are exporting cotton manufactures of a low and ordinary description to South America.

231. Are you aware that in Manchester it has been thought necessary to manufacture goods in imitation of the American domestics, for export to South America?—I do not know that specifically as a matter of fact, but it is probable.

232. Are you aware that the British and Irish linens are met in the markets of Mexico, South America, and the United States, very extensively by German linens?—I am quite aware of it; but it would be more correct to say that the German linens were met by the British and Irish, than that the British and Irish are met by the German; inasmuch as German linens were exported to all parts of the world before British and Irish became articles of export at all, to any extent.

233. Are you aware that the Americans import very largely silks from Lyons?—I am aware of that.

234. You are of course aware that the Americans, consuming cotton to so great an extent, are in possession of the latest inventions of machinery for cotton spinning, and that they have invented machinery themselves similar to that now in use in Manchester?—It is very probable, and I have no doubt of its being so; but I do not specifically know it as a fact.

235. Do you know that the power-loom is in use in the United States of America?—I know it to be so.

236. You are aware also that the French import cotton very largely, and are great manufacturers and spinners of cotton?—Quite so.

237. Also in some parts of Germany?—To some extent.

238. Then if you were to tax machinery in this country, would you not defeat the object of our manufacturers and spinners in meeting foreigners in foreign markets?—Not if the measure is preceded by the other arrangements which I have proposed in answer to previous questions; my object is to obtain an exemption or modification of the inordinate imposts to which British products are subject in the different markets of the world, and should a tax on machinery be deemed inadmissible, I shall be prepared with other propositions to attain the desired object, and lead to the same results.

239. But do not those propositions depend on other countries concurring in them?—In some measure they do; but the resources or means of Great Britain are so ample, that if a general principle of commutation of duties be resolved upon, whatever difficulties may temporarily present themselves, they will soon be overcome; take for example the United States of North America, which would, I think, be among the most pertinacious in acceding to rational propositions, consequent on the manufacturing interest which has already established itself in that country; but as they are still importers of British manufactured productions to a very great extent, upon the importation of which they levy duties, varying from 30 to 60 and 80 per cent., equivalent in some cases to a prohibition, to counteract the injury which these inordinate rates of duty inflict upon the British manufac-

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turer and labourer, I would propose a commutation for an export duty on grain, rice, turpentine, and such other heavy productions of the soil to be admitted into Great Britain duty-free, and perhaps tobacco may be made a part of the arrangement to such an extent as to operate as an effectual check upon smuggling; but, as I have said before, the principle being agreed upon, the details must be arranged in conformity with the peculiarity of circumstances, or otherwise, which the varied interests of the several countries of the world will present; and, as I have before intimated, it will hardly be possible for an obstacle to present itself which Great Britain will not immediately be able to remove.

240. If we were to take the corn of the United States, or other foreign countries, would it not necessarily follow that those countries would draw an equal amount of the produce and manufactures of this country?—Undoubtedly; but this is a question, the answer to which requires to be received very cautiously; for although whatever value of foreign corn imported constitutes an equal value in payment for British goods exported, it is liable to depress the value of corn of British growth twice or three times, or more, the value of that imported.

241. You say that the woollen manufacture of the west of England and other parts has declined; is it your opinion, that there is not a greater consumption of wool in the United Kingdom than ever there was before?—I have stated that the woollen manufacture of Norwich had increased; but it is a peculiar fabric of mixed silk and worsted, not cloths. In the west of England the manufacture, though still existing to some extent, is manifestly in a very declining state.

242. Do you not think there is a more than proportionate increase in Yorkshire?—I believe the woollen manufacture to have increased in some degree, as evidenced by the much larger importation of foreign wool, which in the 10 years, 1825–34, has averaged 31,650,934 lbs. per annum; in 1834 it was 46,554,422 lbs. against an average of less than 4,000,000 lbs. per annum, in the four years 1796–99. Therefore, so far as the importation of foreign wool is a criterion, there is an increase in the woollen manufacture; but as the growth of British wool exceeds the supply imported, in the proportion of four or five to one, without the means of determining the exact quantity, it is difficult to arrive at any just conclusions in regard to the increased extent of the woollen manufacture. The question involves another important consideration; viz. that of the supply of animal food; if this has increased in proportion to the increase of population, the wool will have increased in the same proportion. Sheep's wool, being an animal production, has its limit; while cotton wool, being a tropical vegetable production, has no assignable limit; this distinction sufficiently accounts for the otherwise extraordinary increase of one and the stationary state of the other operation. The best consideration that can be given to the subject, leads to the conclusion that the woollen manufacture has kept increasing in a ratio corresponding with the increase of population, and that for home consumption, inasmuch as the export has not materially increased during half a century.

243. Then although the woollen manufacture may have declined in the west of England, yet it is your opinion, that upon the whole, the woollen manufacture is carried on to a greater extent than formerly?—To the extent just previously stated.

244. But if there be an increased importation of 20,000,000 pounds of foreign wool, and if there be, according to the answer you have given, an increased production of British wool, and if there be an increased exportation of woollen goods, must not the result be an increase of woollen productions?—I am not aware that I can answer the question either more in the affirmative or more distinctly than I have already done, as regards the increase for home wear; but I have stated, in respect to the export, that there is no increase, for although the year 1833 was a year of large export, the annual average of the five years, 1829–33, was only in quantity as 6,466,726 to 6,859,627 in 1798–1802, while the value in 1833 was only 6,540,636 *l.*, against 8,143,193 *l.* in 1818, and 9,338,142 *l.* in 1815; and further, as regards the large export in 1833, which I believe is to be ascribed to the more open market to China, the beneficial result of which is very problematical; but be that as it may, the value exported in 1834 is 565,000 *l.* less than in 1833.

245. Then as wool is now at a very high price, if the price should fall, you would be of opinion that the woollen manufacture would still increase, because there would be an increase also of consumption and of the export trade?—It is difficult to say. It does not always follow that a diminution in price leads to a corresponding

corresponding increase in consumption: that is not the necessary consequence of a diminution in price. The tendency is so undoubtedly; but the low prices of wool, which prevailed in 1826–29, led to no increase of demand for export; indeed mechanical power is not only changing all the relations of social life, but reversing all the rules which governed the actions of men in all past ages. Wool has risen in value 50 per cent., and woollen fabrics have diminished in value; cotton-wool has nearly doubled in value, as compared with 1829–30; and cotton fabrics, as indicated by the quantity and value exported, have also diminished: and while an extraordinary spirit of competition in England has increased the value of the produce of the American soil from 5 *d.* to 9 *d.* per lb. on 400,000,000 lbs. of cotton-wool, equal to 6,000,000 *l.* or 7,000,000 *l.* sterling in amount, the produce of the British soil has diminished in the ratio of 65 to 40 on 15,000,000 qrs. of wheat, and other articles in some degree, equal to 25,000,000 *l.* annually in aggregate amount: and so with the hand-loom weavers, the remuneration for their labour has diminished in a ratio inversely to the increased extent of employment; and I would appeal most earnestly to the Committee, whether extremes like these do not imperatively call for commensurate means of control and relief.

246. Can you state the quantity of cotton yarns exported, as compared with the quantity of manufactured and finished cotton goods?—I cannot state the precise quantity, but I could have done so if I had anticipated that question, in so many pounds weight. As far as my memory serves me, the exportation of yarns is now about 80,000,000 lbs. weight.

247. Are you aware whether the exportation of cotton yarns has increased, and that of cotton goods diminished?—Both have increased in quantity progressively up to the very last year. The yarns I think, in quantity, have been gaining upon the fabrics; but if the Committee will allow me, I will send in a statement which shall exhibit the exact quantity in weight and measure for the last 20 years or more. The export of yarn has increased from an average of 12,000,000 lbs. annually on the four years, 1814–17, to upwards of 80,000,000 lbs. in 1834, being nearly as seven to one, while the increase of fabrics exported has been only as 18,500,000 to 41,000,000 or 42,000,000, or little more than double.

248. Then if the exportation of cotton yarns has increased in a greater proportion than the export of goods, if we were to advance the prices, should we not still further diminish the exportation of goods?—With all due submission, that question appears to lose sight of the principle I have been endeavouring to enforce; if you reduce to practice the proposition I have previously advanced, of getting a remission of those enormous duties levied upon the products of British labour in all countries, you get an equivalent on the one side for more than you impose on the other. It was on that ground that I was unwilling to advance the proposition of taxing machinery, without following up the proposition by obtaining the adoption of the necessary measures to justify it.

249. You are understood to state, that you would wish the measure of reducing the heavy duties imposed upon our goods to be co-existent with the tax upon machinery?—Just so; and I have stated, that if the object cannot be obtained in a way to justify a heavy tax on machinery, I shall be prepared with other means to obtain a remission or modification of those imposts, in a way to justify the adoption of some regulatory measure like the Spitalfields late regulatory Act, and somewhat in accordance with what I believe the suffering hand-loom weavers are now endeavouring to obtain; but some external negotiations must be effected before either one or the other can be beneficially adopted.

250. Now there is one very large continent which we supply almost wholly, the East Indies; are you aware what is the rate of duties levied on English goods or yarns there?—I am not aware of the specific rate of duties, considering that that may be regarded almost as an exclusive market for England. They are her own possessions, and in some measure under her own regulations. In the China market the duties are, comparatively speaking, very limited; commercial intercourse being counteracted in China by a peculiarity of circumstances rather than high rates of duties. The question of duty does not apply to parts beyond the Cape of Good Hope so much as it does to Europe and America.

251. Are you aware of a very recent trade that has grown up, the exportation of cotton yarn to India?—Quite aware of it.

252. When did that first commence?—If the Committee authorize me to send down the statement, I can furnish them with the number of pounds weight sent to every country in every year up to 1834. It is in a paper which I delivered to

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Parliament at the commencement of the last session. The subject is quite familiar to me, but I do not precisely recollect all the dates and numbers. It is entirely a new operation since 1821; in 1822 the quantity of yarn shipped to parts beyond the Cape of Good Hope was 22,000 lbs.; in 1831 it was 6,955,823 lbs., and, I believe, has gone on increasing during the three last years; but I have not the specific quantity later than 1831.

253. Are you aware of the effect that the importation of our yarns has had upon the native population?—I have looked at it with fearful forebodings of its producing serious effects upon the population of India.

254. But you are not aware of the effect it has actually produced?—No; but it is calculated to change the entire character of society in those districts of India where the cotton manufacture was more extensively carried on in a relative and like degree which the application of mechanical power has had on the 800,000 families in the rural districts of Great Britain, whom it has deprived of the means of domestic comfort by the annihilation of all domestic manufacture; so that the mechanical power of England is not merely competing with the labourer of England at 15*s.* or 20*s.* a week, but with the labourer of India, at as few pence a week. Cotton fabrics appear to be carrying out to India even in opposition to that low money price of labour.

255. Are you aware of the fact that cotton factories have been erected in India?—Yes, with English capital.

256. And have they not failed?—That is very probable, but I do not know distinctly.

257. You stated at the commencement of your evidence, from your personal examination, and from your long acquaintance with hand-loom weaving, certain facts, and the first fact you stated was, that the weavers were in great distress. Can you give the Committee any information of the time when they were not in distress?—They might be in distress when high rates of wages were paid; they might be in distress either from improvidence or from inadequacy of employment; inasmuch as I understand, that before the improvements in carding and spinning were perfected, the yarns could not be supplied fast enough for the looms: I do not know that as a fact however. My evidence went to the fact of the same labour now being performed for 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.*, for which 15*s.*, and I believe a much higher price was paid at the commencement of the war in 1793, or just antecedent to the commencement of the war.

258. Are you aware whether they are now suffering from the inadequacy of their wages, or from any of those other causes which you have enumerated, such as improvidence or inadequacy of employment; does their distress at present arise from inadequacy of wages?—I consider so; I am at a loss to conceive how there can be much improvidence out of earnings of 5*s.* 6*s.* or 7*s.* a week, for 14 hours labour a day, where a person has to maintain himself, a wife, and very likely two or more children out of that sum. There may be cases where a man is only earning 6*s.* or 7*s.* a week, and he may have a child or two working in a factory, and bringing home as large an amount or a much greater amount than the earnings of its parent, whereby collectively they may still live in a tolerable degree of comfort; in such case, the degree of comfort will depend much upon economy and being provident; that, however, will present itself in a variety of ways, to which a complication of circumstances give rise.

259. You spoke of the year 1816 being a season of peculiar distress?—I did.

260. Do you know what wages were paid to the manufacturer of any description of cloth at that period?—In tables which I have myself constructed from the repeated evidence given before Committees on inquiries of this kind, I have stated it very circumstantially, year by year, since 1797 down to the present time; but the particular rate of that particular year, does not occur to my recollection, but I can state the causes which led to that fearful depression in 1816 most distinctly.

261. Do you allude to the tables you published, and which have been laid before the House of Commons?—Yes.

262. In that table I think you show that a person employing 1,000 weavers paid, in the year 1816, 300*l.* a week as wages?—I do.

263. And in 1830, which is the lowest period you bring it down to, he only paid 135*l.*?—Just so.

264. Is that falling off in the price paid for labour sufficient in your mind to account for the distress in which the hand-loom weavers are placed?—I think it is quite

quite sufficient to account for very great distress if 135*l.* only is distributed as a remuneration for labour among a given number of persons to whom 300*l.* was formerly distributed.

265. If the low price paid for this labour is sufficient in your mind to account for the distress, do you think no mode can be devised for bringing up the value of this labour to what it was in 1814, 1815 or 1816?—The propositions which I have already advanced in answer to a previous question put, if carried into effect, will assuredly reinstate the labourer in a nearer approximation to his former condition than any other measure that can be devised; with this advantage, that it will be effected without legislating in immediate reference to the question of wages of labour.

266. But you connect your proposal of relief with an acquiescence on the part of foreigners, in matters with respect to which we have no power; how would you get an exemption from the duties imposed on British manufactures in the United States? or would you propose that the weavers should go on in the wretched condition in which they at present are, till that object be accomplished?—I should probably be thought tedious were I to enter into all the details which would justify such a measure as I have proposed. I am quite prepared to do it if the Committee think proper to allow it, as I am decidedly convinced, whatever objections might *primâ facie* present themselves with regard to the different states of the social world, that on reflection and examination, the advantages to them would be so self-evident, and a boon so decided, that they could not be long resisted, but would be as readily availed of, with but few exceptions, by foreign countries, as Great Britain may be to propose them.

267. Will you confine your answer to this point. How will you prevail on the American legislature to do away with the duties which they have imposed on goods of British manufacture?—I have already stated my belief, that the United States would be pertinacious in the first instance in not acceding to such propositions as I should be disposed to offer to them, but it is not necessary that the whole world should be brought at once into the measure which I have suggested. I would, therefore, prefer directing the attention of the Committee to those parts of the world, and to those countries that present no obstacles, which will be found of sufficient extent to justify the immediate adoption of the measure.

268. Confine yourself to the United States. You have admitted in your evidence, or at least it has been stated, and is the fact, that they are now manufacturing about 200,000 bags of cotton annually, and the manufacture in this country, according to your statement, is pretty nearly 1,000,000 bags of cotton?—Just so.

269. You have a manufactory established in the United States already; it is in full operation, and is carrying on its operations to an extent of one-fifth of what is done in this country. Now, confine yourself in your answer to stating how you will prevail on the American legislature to adopt your suggestion?—I have stated distinctly that in the United States I conceive there would be an objection, and she would not be the country to which I should first direct my proposition.

270. Then the proposition which you have submitted to the Committee, so far as regards the United States, might probably end in a failure?—Not so: I do not think it would end in a failure; it may require some little time; for although she is manufacturing on an extensive scale, British cotton, woollen and linen fabrics still find consumers to a large extent in the United States, after paying a duty of 30 to 60 per cent. on their cost in England; therefore we must take into consideration all the variations of quality of which those manufactures are susceptible, before we come to a conclusion on the subject of the proposition which I have advanced as a general principle. The advantage of a free admission into Great Britain of the corn, rice, turpentine and other productions of the American soil, would, I think, soon present itself as a boon too great to be long resisted; but if I am pressed upon the subject of the United States, as a specific question, which I could have wished not to have been, inasmuch as the measures which I propose are fitter to be acted upon than to be talked about; but since I am pressed on the point, I beg permission to direct the attention of the Committee to the relation in which we stand with regard to the United States, in conjunction with Canada: should the United States be over pertinacious, much may be done to counteract the disposition which they have always shown to prejudice British interests by paying a proper regard to the Canadas. Let the principle be adopted in Canada of admitting all products, without any exception, duty-free, whether by sea or by the

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frontier, and raise their local revenue upon their exports, and you give an impetus to commercial activity in that direction, that would not only prove more mutually beneficial to England and the Canadas than existing arrangements, but it must also produce a great commercial effect upon the United States, inasmuch as it could not fail to lead to a vast portion of the produce of western America finding its way to Europe down the Canadian waters, and lead to a corresponding value of British products finding their way into the United States by the Canadian frontier. A discriminating duty has already had the effect of diverting 30,000 barrels of pot and pearl ashes annually, made in the United States, down the Canadian waters, and a still more striking evidence of the control which Great Britain, in conjunction with her possessions in North America, has it in her power to exercise over the United States, may be instanced in the measure which Great Britain adopted to countervail the embargo of the United States in 1807–8. Previous to that event, the United States supplied Great Britain with 100,000 loads of timber annually, and the West Indies with an equal value in lumber; this operation Great Britain was enabled to prevent being renewed, and she has it still in her power to exercise a corresponding control at the present time, should the United States persist in calling for it.

271. Are you aware that when goods are shipped from this country to any foreign country it is expected that we should have an adequate return for those goods? Does it come within your knowledge, or have you any experience on the subject, whether, with the increase of our productions in this country, we now get the same returns from America, from Russia, or from any other State with which we trade, as we did when fewer goods were manufactured?—To answer the question fully and fairly, it calls not only for a development of the nature and extent of the external transactions of the United Kingdom with each and all the several countries of the world, but of the *balance of trade*, or modes of equalization of the several countries with each other, and of the influence and effect which the great money transactions in foreign loans, &c. have had, and are still producing, upon the commercial transactions of the world, as well as of our monetary standard of value, with which, in all the minute and varied relations they are involved, separately and in the aggregate, I claim credit for being perfectly familiar, practically, as well as from the result of more elaborate and patient inquiry than has been bestowed on the subject by any other individual, and for having been the first to endeavour to awaken the attention of the Legislature and the public to the portentous consequences to which the progressive depreciation in the value of all the products of British labour must lead if not timely averted. At pages 71–75 of the Papers arranged by me and presented to Parliament, which have previously been adverted to, I have shown the aggregate result of the external transactions of Great Britain with each and every of the several countries of the world annually through a period of 130 years; and at pages 126–167 I have shown the nature and extent, both in quantity and value, of the transactions with each country in each year since 1826. At page 112 I have shown that the cotton yarn exported in 1814 averaged 4 *s.* 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ *d.* per lb.; in 1815 and 1816, 3 *s.* 6 *d.* per lb.; and, on an average of the last four years, only 15 *d.* per lb.; and that in 1814 every 100 of quantity of cotton fabrics exported was equal to a value of 104 *l.*; in 1816–17, 90 *l.* and 80 *l.* respectively; and on an average of the last four years, only 34 *l.*; being in the proportion of more than three for one at the latter period compared with the former, while the raw material (which constitutes only about a fifth of the value, the rest being interest, profit and labour,) is about one half only less; hence, as far as the question applies to the United States of North America in 1831–34, we have given three of cotton fabrics for two of cotton wool, instead of three for three as in 1814–16, and of labour three for one. And, as far as the question applies to Russia, in 1826 we gave 12,000,000 lbs. of yarn for 1,068,265 *l.* in value, averaging rather more than 2 *s.* per lb. In 1831 we gave 13,959,666 lbs. for 790,371 *l.*, being less than 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* per lb.; the price of the raw material having been about the same at both periods; in 1826 we received from Russia 48,000 tons of tallow, at a value of about 1,400,000 *l.*; and in 1831 an equal quantity, at an increased value of 2 *l.* to 5 *l.* per ton; and in 1834 near 70,000 tons, also at an increased value as compared with 1826; hence, as far as the question applies to tallow and the years here selected, Great Britain has given to Russia two for one; and on reference to pages 127 and 156 of the Papers before referred to, it will be seen that the nature of the transactions between Great Britain and Russia are such, as

to enable the latter to draw bullion to the amount of 1,500,000 *l.* to 2,000,000 *l.* annually. Similar illustrations might be given in reference to France and the wools of Germany, but the question will perhaps be deemed sufficiently answered already.

272. Is the Committee to understand you to say, that we gave more of our manufactures in return for a given quantity of the cotton of America and tallow of Russia in 1834 than we did in former years?—It is really so, in the proportions previously stated.

273. But if we give more manufactured goods, take fustians, calicoes, or any other cotton goods which we send over to America in return for their cotton, and if we give a greater quantity of these things in return for the same quantity of cotton, are we not pursuing a losing trade?—It is a less and less advantageous trade, yet not absolutely a losing one; so long as anything is added to the value of the raw material, something is gained to the nation, while the labourer or artisan who gives the increased value may be very inadequately rewarded; the diminished value of the products of British labour exported is partly at the expense of diminished profits, but more especially at the expense of the labourer, in a greatly reduced rate of wages.

274. Then the extension of this foreign trade has not been beneficial to the labourer?—It has been exceedingly prejudicial, in so far as it has tended to a diminution in the rate of his wages and his means of subsistence, and it is not only prejudicial to him, but it prejudices all the productive and active interests of the country.

275. Are you aware that the same diminution in the rate of profit obtained by those who employ machinery has gone on in a corresponding ratio with the diminution to which the hand-loom weavers have been subjected?—It has been the competition consequent on the facility of production by steam-power and improved machinery that first led to the depression of price; the privation of the hand-loom weaver was an inevitable consequence of the competition which the uncontrolled and extended application of scientific and mechanical power engendered.

276. Then taking manual labour and machinery combined, we are throwing away the industry of this country, by which foreigners reap a decided advantage, and we suffer a great loss?—Sustained great injury, rather than "suffered a great loss," would, I think, be the more proper term. England has given since the termination of the war in 1815, 150 millions,—I take that as the minimum, though I think I might with propriety say 200 millions,—value of the products of labour, which resolves itself into as complete an abstraction as if it had been levied as a contribution at the point of the bayonet.

277. Then where is the propriety of trying to find out the means of benefiting these starving weavers, and restoring the profits of the manufacturers, by attempting any further extension of foreign trade?—It is not so much an extension I am anxious to urge upon the attention of the Committee, as that species of regulation which will tend to make all transactions profitable, whether on a limited or an extended scale.

278. But do you see any probability of so changing foreign trade, as to bring back the same given quantity of cotton for calicoes that we had 20 years ago?—The facility of production, by the aid of scientific and mechanical power, enables us to give more than we did 20 years ago, without diminishing our advantages; and I see the way very clearly of placing our external commercial transactions on a more mutually beneficial and purely reciprocal footing than they were 20 years ago, or at any former period.

279. That is, that the foreigners will make such changes as to give us a greater quantity of corn, a greater quantity of cotton, a greater quantity of hemp and tallow, than they now do for the same quantity of any one of our manufactures. You think that is practicable?—It is not so much a question of quantity as of proportion, or equivalent in value that is now required; my aim would be to obtain such quantities and sustain such values as should render all commercial transactions mutually beneficial and purely reciprocal, and on such terms as to give to labour a due and liberal reward; all this I unhesitatingly say is practicable, and Great Britain will be guilty of the sin of omission in the highest possible degree, and of deep injustice to the hand-loom weavers and other suffering labourers, if she does not immediately proceed to render it demonstrative.

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280. It is known that for the last two or three years we have given 30 pieces of a given description of calico for 300 pounds of American cotton?—Yes.

281. And the average of the 24 years preceding that was not more than 24 pieces?—Just so.

282. Now keep to that point, and show me the way to prevail upon the American cotton grower or the American legislature to give us 300 pounds for 24 pieces instead of having 30 as they have now?—The question, as well as the two previous ones, I deem trifling, and the answer I think is fully given in those to the third and fourth previous questions put to me; one reason, and a sufficient one too, why 30 pieces are now given for the same weight of cotton, for which 24 pieces only were given formerly, is the high price of cotton, which the spirit of competition in England has occasioned, from 5*d.* to 9*d.* per lb.; if, therefore, the British Government had put on a duty of 4*d.* per lb. instead of suffering competition to give the boon to the American planter, and thereby enable the banking interest of America to draw 20,000,000 dollars in bullion at the expense of British labour in a single year, and that while the produce of our own soil had been exposed to a depression in the proportion of 66 to 40, that, viz. a duty of 4*d.* per lb., would have led to the obtaining again 300 lbs. for 24 pieces of cloth as formerly. I do not recommend the duty of 4*d.* per lb., I only give it in answer to the honourable Member's question.

283. You have told us that within a given time this country has been impoverished to the amount of 150,000,000*l.* or 200,000,000*l.* by foreign trade; do you think that if we had had no foreign trade we should have been by that sum richer than at present?—If less that amount had been exported, the hand-loom weavers and the country at large might have been in an equally disadvantageous position, from the absence of employment; but the country might have been in so much better a condition had the foreign trade been controlled by proper and commensurate regulations.

284. Can you state whether England has not within itself sufficient power to make its people happy and comfortable?—Great Britain undoubtedly possesses within itself all the means of enjoyment in a much higher degree than at any former period; but I see no reason, either in a pecuniary, moral, or social point of view, why, like the Japanese, Great Britain should exclude herself from or diminish her intercourse with the world at large; compatible regulation is what is wanted, and not exclusion or restraint.

285. Now how will you get the 300 lbs. of cotton for the 24 pieces, instead of giving, as we do now, 30 pieces?—I really thought that that particular question had been disposed of; but as the honourable Gentleman has revived it, I must beg permission of the Committee to show how the large external money operations have influenced the value of all the products of British labour, whereby the honourable Gentleman will see the cause of the depression, and after that, not perhaps how to get the same weight for 24 as we now get for 30, but an adequate compensation in some way or other. I have already stated that the year 1816 was the commencement of the period from whence the diminution of the rate of labour has been uniform. There were alterations in the rates of wages from 1793 down to 1816. The peace of Amiens gave rise to an increase of wages, and there were three or four alternations down to 1816, but from that time downwards it has been one uniform progressive depression. The cause of the extreme depression, and I may say prostration, of all the interests of the kingdom in 1816, is seen to be the sudden cessation of circulation of the large amount of bills which the Government circulated externally to sustain the operations of the war. I have some memoranda, if the Committee will permit me to refer to them, but my memory serves me sufficiently to state, that in 1814 the amount of bills drawn from abroad, on the various departments of Government, exceeded 25,000,000*l.*; in 1815 they exceeded 20,000,000*l.*, and in 1816 they were below 8,000,000*l.* It was these bills that constituted the means of payment and equalization of the mercantile account pending the last six or seven years of the war. We have no official account of the amount of those bills prior to 1814, but they could not have averaged less from 1806 to 1814 than exceeding 20,000,000*l.* per annum, having exceeded 25,000,000*l.* in 1814. It was these bills, and not products, either in tale, weight or measure, that equalized the commercial account pending the war. It was the large amount of the bills which the commissariat and various operations of Government put into circulation; and it is a curious fact, and an interesting one too, that the amount of bills so circulated corresponds with the excess of products exported

exported over and above the value of the products received; and the balances of amount funded during the same period bear a close analogy to each other: therefore the three operations are seen to have been carried on in relation to one another, co-existent and co-operating; one was a consequence of the other.

286. You have spoken of the cessation of the bills of exchange as tending to diminish the exportation of British manufactures?—Not to diminish the exportation, but to depreciate the value. The first great spoliation of value took place in 1816. If there is a commercial gentleman in the room it must be still fresh in his mind. It was a prostration of interests, more general and severe than was ever before experienced in any community; and from this paralysis, notwithstanding the unexampled exertions of the people, the country has never yet recovered. I shall be able to explain through each consecutive year, if the Committee wish it, why there has appeared to be a partial relief from that pressure, and why ultimately the same prostration as took place in 1816, must occur again, with the probability of the country not being able to recover from it, unless timely measures are reduced to practice and carried into effect to avert it. The years 1817 and 1818, it will be remembered, were years of great commercial activity, and return to high prices. It may be asked why? Inasmuch as the bills before adverted to, which in 1816 had been reduced from above 20,000,000 *l.* to below 8,000,000 *l.*, in 1817 were reduced to below 3,000,000 *l.* as a consequence of the entire cessation of the operations of the war; but the European market was again supplied with another species of bills, which produced the same effect as the Government bills had done during the war. We have no means of determining their exact amount; but they must have approximated to at least 20,000,000 *l.* in amount in the years 1817–18. There was inscribed in the Three per Cent. stocks of England, between 1810 and the termination of the war, about 20,000,000 *l.* in amount for account of foreigners, for which only about 11,500,000 *l.* of current money had been paid, while gold ranged from 90 *s.* to 110 *s.* per oz. Then, while all the products of manufacturing labour and wages of weaving were reduced a half, 3 per cent. stock rose from an average of 58 *l.* 13 *s.* 9 *d.* in 1815, to an average of 76 *l.* 16 *s.* in 1817, with gold at 4 *l.* per oz., in which latter year, a member of the present Government was commissioned by the allied potentates of Europe to negotiate a loan for France, which yielded upwards of 8 per cent. per annum interest: this operated not only as an inducement for the foreign holders of English stock to sell out and withdraw, but also to the transfer of a large amount of English capital into the new French security. These combined operations gave rise to the creation and circulation, in 1817–18, of, as before stated, bills of exchange in the several marts of Amsterdam, Hamburgh and Paris, to the amount of at least 20,000,000 *l.* sterling, and sustained the commercial operations of those two years to that amount in the same way as the British Government bills had done during the war, and caused that temporary return to high prices, which again gave way before the close of 1818, and led to another revulsion in 1819. Operations similar in principle, though not so large in amount, but to a greater or lesser extent, have been going on from 1820 down to the present time; millions after millions have been thrown into the treasuries of Russia, Prussia, Denmark, Austria, France, Holland, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy, in Europe, and also into the treasuries of all the States of America. On Saturday last only, another 9,000,000 of ducats were proposed to be raised for Naples; and scarce a week passes without some plausible pretence being held forth to induce a continuous transfer of English capital into foreign securities. These transactions, pending their operation, give rise to a creation and circulation of bills, which aid for the time the mercantile operations in the way before described; but in their ultimate result, if some means are not devised to counteract the fearful consequences which they involve, they will lead to a prostration of interests, not merely equal to but more fatal than was experienced in 1816, inasmuch as the Committee cannot fail to see that when the transferring of capital ceases, so much means of payment for British products exported are withdrawn, and a corresponding depreciation in the value ensues; in addition to which, the interest on the amount of capital transferred, be the amount of interest what it may, 5,000,000 *l.*, 7,000,000 *l.* or 10,000,000 *l.*, sterling per annum, must of necessity be paid out of the proceeds of the products imported, and thereby occasion a further diminution of the means of payment of the British products exported.

287. Then you attribute the rise of prices which took place in 1817 and 181[illegible] mainly

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mainly to the operations of foreign loans, and to circumstances promoting a great transfer of capital abroad?—I do.

288. Are you aware that in June 1816 the Bank Restriction Act was renewed for two years?—I am aware of the fact.

289. And are you aware that a positive increase of the Bank of England note circulation was effected by Government, for the express purpose of relieving the distress of 1816, to the amount of from 20,000,000 *l.* to 30,000,000 *l.* of permanent circulation?—I beg the honourable Member's pardon, but I have no recollection of the circumstance, nor do I think it occurred.

290. Are you aware that on the half-yearly average of 1817, ending June, the positive permanent circulation of Bank of England notes was 31,000,000 *l.*?—I do not remember the exact amount; but I have arranged a statement, showing the amount of notes in circulation at the close of every week, from December 1814 down to the present time, pages 54–5 of the Papers before referred to, which will show the exact amount.

291. Suppose the circulation of Bank of England notes to have been increased by Government, between June 1816 and June 1817, from 20,000,000 *l.* to 31,000,000 *l.*, do you not think that that great increase of the only legal tender then existing in the country must have had a very great effect in increasing the circulation of the instruments of credit founded on those legal tenders?—If such an increase of circulation had taken place; but, with all due deference to the recollection of the honourable Member, I fear he must there be mistaken; but, being so, its tendency would be, of course, to enhance the price of commodities in some degree.

292. Do you not think the action upon the currency effected by the renewal of the Bank Restriction Act in June 1816, for two years, had a very great effect in raising the prices of British property and labour from the serious depression of 1816?—That Act of 1816 tended rather to prevent a further depression than to the enhancement of prices which prevailed in 1817–18; that rise of prices having been the result of the causes which I have before explained. There was an excess of Exchequer bills issued in 1817, exceeding 12,000,000 *l.* in amount, with which the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund operated on the Stock Exchange, and therewith facilitated the transfer of the stock then held by foreigners and others, as previously mentioned; and so far the Government was instrumental in aiding the return to high prices by the issue of that 12,000,000 of Exchequer bills, which were funded in the following year: it was probably these bills which the honourable Member has confounded with the Bank-note circulation.

293. Do you not think that the fall of the price of gold from 5 *l.* 11 *s.* to 4 *l.* 2 *s.*, which took place in the Autumn of 1815, tended also to act as a tax of 40 per cent. on the export of British manufactures, and as a bounty of 40 per cent. on the importation of foreign produce into England?—I can answer that question in the affirmative, from the most painful recollection of facts, as far as a depression of 40 per cent. on all the productions of commerce and labour was coeval with the alteration in the price of gold; but the fall in the price of gold was an *effect* and not the cause of the depression in the price of commodities, which was caused by the sudden cessation of issue of the Government bills at the close of 1815 and in 1816, as before explained; nor did it operate as a bounty on foreign products imported, because the depression in the price of the products was more than equal to the advantage in the rate of exchange which the depression in the price of gold occasioned. The parties with whom it operated as a bounty were the stockholders, and all those in receipt of fixed money incomes. To the stockholder it was a two-fold bounty; first, in the enhanced value of his stock, and, second, in an equally reduced value of all commodities.

294. Will you proceed?—A collateral question was put to me just as I was proceeding to show the effect which must follow the cessation of the transfer of British capital into foreign security, and the condition in which the country will be then placed by the whole onus of the interest created on the amount transferred falling exclusively upon the manufacturing labour of England. A greater mistake was never indulged in than to suppose, as is commonly supposed, that the interest on the British capital vested in foreign stock would be paid at the expense of the industry and resources of the countries in which it was vested; it is paid exclusively out of the proceeds of those products imported, which otherways would have remained to augment the means of payment for British

products exported. I will illustrate this by the transactions with some particular country, say Brazil. Every mercantile man connected with that country will know, from painful experience, how often he has been precluded from making remittances, in consequence of the Brazilian government taking up the bills which had been drawn on Europe against the products exported thereto, to remit to the monied class on account of the interest on loans; and the same effect will be familiar to all those concerned in the transactions of export to the United States, with which country the transactions of the year just ended afford a prominent and painful instance. I have previously stated that since 1831, while the agricultural produce of England, as indicated by the price of wheat, had fallen from 66 to 40, the agricultural produce of America, as indicated by the price of cotton wool, had risen in the ratio of from 50 to 90; at which advanced price the products of the United States imported into Great Britain in 1834 have exceeded 10,000,000*l.* in amount, the quantity of cotton wool alone having been upwards of 269,000,000 pounds; yet, notwithstanding this large resource, the parties interested in the export of the products of British labour to the United States have never been exposed to greater embarrassment: and why? because the American Government and the banking interest of that country have taken up and absorbed upwards of 5,000,000*l.* in amount of the bills created on account of the cotton, &c. here imported, to remit to the monied interest of Europe for bullion. Hence it is that the metallic currency which the United States are proposing to themselves to establish resolves itself into a tax on the productive labour of England as effectually as though it was levied in kind or as a forced contribution; and in like manner I might proceed to show, that every dollar of the 127,000,000 in account which the United States' government has liquidated since 1815 has also resolved itself into a tax on British labour. The process was, first, to levy the amount in inordinate rates of duty on British products imported, and therewith liquidate the 127,000,000 of dollars in question; which amount, as it has been released from one account, has been formed into others, for facilitating internal conveyance and founding of joint-stock manufacturing establishments, to sustain which inordinate rates of duty still continue to be levied on the products of British labour, while the wines of France and all other countries, tea, coffee, fruit and all articles of enjoyment and luxury, are either admitted free or at nominal rates of duty only.

295. Then you think that the great fall of prices which has taken place in British manufactures has facilitated the annual transfer of wealth from the industrious classes of England into the public treasuries of foreign nations?—It is not matter of thought merely, it has in reality been so; and I might proceed further to illustrate the case by showing the nature and extent of the intercourse with the several nations of Europe, except that the transactions of European nations are not only involved with each other, but with the Americans, and Great Britain with the whole, in a way to render it more difficult to explain; but it is not less a matter of fact that the 2,000 millions of francs, equal to 80,000,000 *l.* sterling, which France has coined since 1816, resolves itself into a tax on British labour as effectually as I have shown the 20,000,000 dollars of bullion imported into the United States to have done in the year 1834.

296. In 1815 the weavers of six-quarter cambrics, at Bolton, had 14*s.* for weaving one piece?—Yes.

297. In 1817 the price of weaving the same piece was reduced to 9*s.*?—Yes.

298. In 1816 it fell to 12*s.*, but in this it got to 9*s.*?—Yes.

299. In 1826 that which had been 9*s.* fell to 7*s.*, and in 1829 to 5*s.* 6*d.* You have now been endeavouring to make out a cause for this reduction in the value of the poor man's labour, and, if you are understood right, you attribute it to the alterations which have taken place in the currency. Now, that being the fact, do you wish to qualify at all an answer which you gave, to about the third question put to you, as to what was the cause of the distress of the hand-loom weavers, where you attributed it to an extension of mechanical power?—The Committee, I think, cannot fail to remember, that I did not confine the cause exclusively to mechanical power, but I stated that the uncontrolled and extended application of mechanical power was the first great cause of that depression. I was unwilling to obtrude upon the Committee any observations that might be deemed irrelevant, and was anxious to confine my answers as near to the question put to me as possible, till fuller explanation was drawn from me by other questions, or I should have gone on to state that the steam-engine was the first great cause of that extraordinary and unparalleled

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paralleled development of power which Great Britain has progressively evidenced since 1786 or 1788, when it first began to show itself. It sustained a war of 20 years' duration, and an increase of 20,000,000 *l.* per annum of annuities, which the war gave rise to; which increase of annuities, so far from being seen to be a burthen, when all the interests of the empire are viewed in combination, and in due relation to each other, will be seen to be an indispensable part of the combination, and necessary as a compensating lever to the extraordinary force of the mechanical power. It was the sudden change of action, or cessation of augmenting that compensating lever internally, and thereby diverting the surplus resources of the country into external channels, that has led to such extreme privation among the hand-loom weavers, and some other order of labourers; and I beg honourable Members will do me the justice to remember, that when I have shown the reaction in favour of high prices which the money transactions of 1817 and 1818 led to, I did not apply any portion of the benefit thereby derived to the condition of the weavers, for I was aware that that being a temporary advance, as far as labour was concerned, it derived no benefit therefrom. Too much time had intervened, and the rate of wages had settled down too permanently again to rise by adventitious causes; indeed it was the colonial produce rather than the manufactured that benefited by that advance. Colonial produce, in some instances, more than doubled in value: coffee in the proportion of 140 *s.* or 150 *s.* per cwt. to 70 *s.*, and some other articles of colonial produce in like proportion.

300. But you are aware that in 1815 there was no complaint of inadequate wages from the hand-loom weavers?—Just so; but there was great depression towards the close of the year.

301. And you must also be aware that at that period machinery had been extended to an amazing extent?—Just so. It was not till after the close of the war in June 1815, and the great change in the funding and other monetary operations of Europe which followed that event, that machinery began to operate banefully.

302. Then it is to be inferred from that that the labouring people may go on well with an extension of machinery?—Undoubtedly, if properly controlled, and other things being duly regulated; it is an affair of regulation entirely.

303. Then machinery in the abstract, or any extension of it, is not injurious to any community?—Most certainly not; if properly controlled, it is susceptible of conferring a progressively increasing advantage to mankind at large, as certainly as for 20 years past it has operated banefully.

304. Then it is for want of proper regulation that the distress which you attribute to machinery has arisen?—Just so.

305. What do you mean by proper control?—Taxation or commutations, such as I have already submitted to the consideration of the Committee.

306. You think so?—There can be no doubt about it.

307. Now in 1815 the consumption of cotton in England was 6,000 bags a-week: it is found that the weavers had 14 *s.* for weaving this one piece. In 1826 the consumption of cotton had increased to 12,000 bags a-week, and the wages of the weaver were reduced to 7 *s.* In 1834 the consumption of cotton was 18,000 bags a-week, and the weaver's wages were reduced to 5 *s.* 6 *d.*?—It is a melancholy fact.

308. Then with this increase of production we have been going on for 20 years adding in every successive stage to the sufferings of those engaged in the production?—Just so, for the reasons which I have stated.

309. Now the same thing will be shown in manufactures made by machinery?—Yes, the diminished profits of mechanical productions of necessity forces down the value of manual labour.

310. The same depreciation in prices and profits has gone on in the fabrics manufactured by machinery?—Yes.

311. Now you have in your evidence convinced the Committee that machinery in itself is not the cause of the distress, nor any extension of it; but that machinery may be increased and extended so as to confer a blessing upon the community?—No doubt of it, and in a ratio inversely to the distress and privation which during the last 20 years it has in so many instances occasioned.

312. But, for want of a proper direction, this blessing has not been shared by those engaged in the production?—It has not.

313. Now can you tell the Committee who it is, or what party it is in the State that has derived any advantage from this increase of production?—There can be no

no doubt about some parties having derived advantage from it, inasmuch as it has enabled the country to transfer from 150,000,000 *l.* to 200,000,000 *l.* value of products since 1816 into foreign security. It is not for me to mention particular individuals who have benefited, but that great benefits must have resulted to some portion of the community there cannot be any question; and if, instead of foreign investment, those surplus gains had been applied to internal purposes, a corresponding degree of internal advantage must have resulted. Suppose for instance, 10,000,000 *l.* per annum of this surplus capital had been absorbed by the British Government, and an equal amount of taxation remitted, either on commodities or of local taxation for the maintenance of the poor and other local payments, such an arrangement, while it would have added 400,000 *l.* or 500,000 *l.* per annum to the annuity account, would have augmented the means of the country five or six times that amount to have sustained it; and should a tax on machinery be inadmissible, or not immediately desirable, there is no valid reason whatever why the present Session should be suffered to pass away without the most substantial relief being afforded to all who need it, hand-loom weavers and others. This measure recommends itself as strongly as a means of instant relief, as it does in counteraction of the tendency, by not resorting to it, to induce further foreign investment: and by establishing an invariable rate of interest for the national annuity stock, on such a basis as should encourage the conversion of perpetual into life or other terminable annuity, the country would be brought into a condition, in the course of a quarter of a century or so, to absorb all the surplus capital for the benefit of the present age on one side, without an augmentation for the future, inasmuch as the annuities which would become gradually and progressively extinct on one side would be equal to the new obligation on the other.

314. Are you aware that there has been an immense amount of foreign loans negotiated in this country?—Certainly, I have stated so. It is the excess in the value of products exported over and above the value of the products imported that constitutes the amount vested in foreign loans.

315. Can you tell the Committee the amount, or anywhere near it, from your recollection, since the close of the war?—I was the first to place the subject before the public. I believe the statement is not in the book which I delivered to the House of Commons, but it is in the evidence given before the Committee on Banking Affairs in 1832; but the amount of loans specifically raised in England convey no adequate idea of the extent of capital transferred, inasmuch as it is not necessary for a loan to be created for transfers to be going on. It is known to be a daily transaction and a matter of fact, and it is on this principle that I have, on a previous occasion, endeavoured to awaken the attention of the public to the fact, that the 17,000,000 *l.* which the savings banks have thrown since 1816 into the hands of the Commissioners for the reduction of the National Debt, so called, has led to the transfer of a corresponding amount from British to foreign security. It is not the depositors themselves who are the transferrers; but as the deposits are paid into the hands of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt as trustees, they operate with it upon the Stock Exchange, and thereby facilitate the transfer of a corresponding amount into foreign security, so that in fact the 17,000,000 *l.* of deposits of savings banks resolves itself into an absolute abstraction from the resources of the country, as effectually as though the amount had been levied by forced contribution. Reverse the operation, and suppose that 17,000,000 *l.* of new stock had been created in England, and 17,000,000 *l.* of taxation remitted, it then would have been a balancing of internal interests, which must have added as much to the general prosperity of the country as the converse operation has militated against it by facilitating foreign investment.

316. Have you any recollection of the amount that has been negotiated in this country since the close of the war?—I think that the loans that have been negotiated in London have been about 110,000,000 *l.* in nominal amount. The amount paid up may be between 80,000,000 *l.* and 90,000,000 *l.*, but double that amount has been transferred.

317. Then has the negotiation of these foreign loans had any influence in reducing the wages of the weavers in this country?—They rather encourage and sustain the wages of weaving pending their operation; the probability is, all things else remaining the same, that if no foreign loans had taken place there would have been a greater depression in the wages of labour than has already taken place; but it is the ulterior consequences which constitute the danger to

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which all British interests are exposed, by suffering them to work their own level and produce their own disaster. It is when the transfer of capital ceases, and that the interest must be paid out of the value of the imports which should remain to constitute good payment for the products exported, that the consequences will be the most severely felt. It is not however so much what the wages for weaving now are, nor what they would have been had no transfer of capital taken place, but what they might have been had the surplus capital which has been transferred been timely and wisely appropriated to internal purposes; this is the point which I feel most anxious to enforce on the attention of the Committee.

318. But how do those become possessed of the property here that they so lend to foreigners in the shape of loan, and from whence does it spring? It springs from a variety of sources. It should be borne in mind that however severe the distress and privation which one portion of the community may be experiencing, that the aggregate means and resources of the country are constantly increasing, and will continue to do so as long as there is an exemption from convulsion, whereby the misery and increasing privation of a greater number augments the means of increase among a lesser number; the parties thus benefited are all those who were in possession of fixed money incomes in 1815–16: and notwithstanding the deplorable state of the hand-loom weavers, and of the agricultural labourers in certain districts, some branches of manufacture and some retail trades are still yielding great surplus profits, in addition to which there is in the country a large class of money capitalists in receipt of large incomes beyond their expenditure for subsistence; and it is these excesses of income, some derived from mortgages, some from stocks of various kinds, and otherways, that constitute a large portion of the means for continuous transfers into foreign security.

319. Is any part of it raised in the 50,000,000*l.* of taxes which this country has to pay to Government?—It is raised in the 50,000,000*l.* of taxes so far as any part of the taxes has been applied to the purchase of stock, which since 1816 has been done to the amount of about 35,000,000*l.*; such purchases of stock by the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund having directly facilitated the transfer of an equal amount by the sellers thereof into foreign security, and in like manner the accumulating fund in the name of the Accountant-general of the Court of Chancery has the same tendency to facilitate transfers into foreign security.

320. But would stock be of any value at all without the raising of these 50,000,000*l.* of taxes. The stock in itself is no substantive thing that you can either see or touch?—Very true; the stock is purely ideal, and will cease to be of any value when means cannot be raised to pay the interest; but this, I think, is presupposing unnecessarily; and it becomes substantive by being convertible into gold at 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* per oz.

321. And thus abstract the gold from this country?—The transfer of stock from British to foreign security does not necessarily lead to a direct abstraction of gold; the transfer of capital and its investment in foreign security being more readily effected by becoming involved in and with the commercial operations, except when some new loan is in progress, or extraordinary inducement to transfer prevails, whereby the influx of bills which the transactions give rise to alter the rates of exchange, so as to make the export of gold a profitable operation as an article of merchandize.

322. But what is it that brings the gold to this country?—Gold is brought to this country under the prevalence of opposite causes; when the inducements to vest in foreign securities slacken, bills become scarce, and premiums are demanded for them, until gold becomes an object to import as an article of merchandize, as it was in the other case to export. But our fixed price of 3*l.* 17*s.* 10½*d.* per oz. precludes the possibility of the rates of exchange vibrating more than one-eighth or one-fourth per cent. as an extreme case, beyond the risk and expense of conveying gold backwards and forwards; gold is also brought into this country from Brazil as an article of production.

323. And from what do the mercantile transactions take rise, but from the export of goods manfactured in this country?—Mercantile transactions, in the legitimate sense of the term, consist in exchanging the productions of one country for another, and as such manufactured productions are exported from this country to effect an exchange for other productions.

324. Then the gold is brought to this country in return for articles of manufacture or surplus produce of some kind?—To some extent it is.

325. Can you conceive its being brought in any other way? will they give it us?—No, they will not give it to us, but it comes from the Brazils to some extent in return for capital sunk in the mines, and sometimes on account of interest on loans; nor is it necessary that an export of goods should take place to obtain gold when wanted for any specific purpose, because the extensive credits to which the transactions on foreign loans have given rise, enable 2,000,000 *l.* to 3,000,000 *l.* value of gold to change its position without any direct export of other merchandize: in the ultimate result of its action, however, it must resolve itself into an exchange of merchandize.

326. But are you not aware, that to get the gold into this country at the close of the war, having very little here before, the prices of all manufactured articles fell, in consequence of the contraction of the currency?—There appears to me to be a confounding of effect for cause in the question. I have most distinctly shown the depression in the price of commodities which took place in 1816 to have resulted from the diminished circulation of Government bills abroad; the higher rates of exchange demanded for bills, as a consequence of their scarcity, would have a natural tendency to bring gold into the country from wherever it could be obtained, more especially so as the depression in all the articles of import was equal to that on the articles of export.

327. Can you state that the curtailment of the currency, in order to fetch here the gold, has not an immediate bearing upon the deterioration of the value of labour in this country?—There is, I think, in this question, as well as the preceding one, a confounding of effect with cause. If the Government bills circulated abroad during the war be deemed currency, then the diminished issue of 1816 may be pronounced a curtailment of the currency, which produced a serious depression in the value of all the products of labour, and in the remuneration for labour; but there was no other curtailment of the currency except what followed as an effect of the depression, not as the cause of it; nor had *fetching* of gold anything to do with the depression. Gold had a tendency to come into the country without being fetched, as an effect of the depression consequent on the scarcity of bills, and not as the cause of it.

328. Then, to bring you back to the negotiation of foreign loans, can you point out any way in which foreign loans can be made by capitalists in this country, whose capital is raised from productive labour, that shall not be injurious to those engaged in that production?—Most certainly; if the British Government will but absorb all the surplus money capital of the country in the way which I have laid down, in answer to a previous question put to me, that will counteract the inducement to seek foreign security, and prove beneficial to all the interests of the country, consuming as well as productive.

329. But the Government have not negotiated the foreign loans; you attribute it to individuals, Rothschild and others; these are the men engaged in negotiating foreign loans?—Very true; but if the British Government themselves become absorbers of the capital or borrowers of the money, you counteract the tendency to transfer into foreign security. The abstract notion of the Government becoming borrowers of the money leads *primâ facie* to an apprehension that you are going to increase the national debt; but if taxation, either general or local, be remitted to the same extent that you absorb capital, say for instance 10,000,000 *l.*, and take it at four per cent., there is a new obligation created of 400,000 *l.* per annum; but by the remission of taxation to 10,000,000 *l.* in amount, you give such an impetus to industry, and such an expansion to all the activities of the kingdom, as must necessarily lead to such an enlarged consumption that could not fail to give you six times the means of paying the amount of the new obligation so created.

330. Is the Committee to understand it to be your opinion, that the loans which the Government contracted could have been raised without a depreciation in the currency of this country?—I presume the question applies to the loans raised during the war, from 1793 to 1815, inclusive; and if by currency is meant gold at 3 *l.* 17 *s.* 10½ *d.* per oz., it is doubtful whether the funding operation could or would have been carried to the extent it was, under the departure from that standard of value: 117,000,000 *l.*, however, was funded during the first five years of the war, 1793–97, prior to the Bank Restriction Act, and it was 1809 before any very sensible difference manifested itself in the value of gold, before which year upwards of 200,000,000 *l.* more had been funded: 270,000,000 *l.* more were funded in the seven years, 1809–15, and it is probable that such an extent

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of operation would not have taken place in those seven years but for the entire abandonment of all reference to gold as a standard of value.

331. Is it your opinion that the Government of this country could have contracted the debt it has contracted without having recourse to a paper currency?—Probably not to the same extent.

332. Could they have contracted a debt of 100,000,000 *l.* without a paper currency?—They contracted a debt of 117,000,000 *l.* in the five years, 1793–97.

333. But there was a paper currency then?—In about the same relative degree as at present.

334. You have been speaking of the operation that loans negotiated by Government and sent out into foreign countries have upon the labour and industry of this country. Is the operation similar with regard to loans contracted since we returned to cash payments in 1815; loans negotiated by individuals?—Does the question relate to loans which Great Britain contracted? It is not intelligible to me.

335. While the Government of this country were contracting loans, it is easy to see that those loans would come back to this country in return for the surplus produce we exported; but since the system of borrowing on the part of the Government was put a stop to, and since we returned to cash payments in 1815, since when there has been no expansion of the currency except for a very short time, you have stated that upwards of 100,000,000 *l.* have been lent by individuals in this country in the shape of loans?—Yes; but the question implies that during the war loans were raised in England, and the proceeds sent abroad to come back again in exchange for products exported. Such was not the process of operation, which was this: British products were exported and sold in exchange for the current money of the countries to which exported; while the trading transactions were thus going on, the commissariat and agents of the British Government were purchasing supplies of provisions, &c. in the several parts of the world, not with funds out of the loans raised in England, but with ready money, which the traders in the goods exported supplied, and for which they received in exchange those bills which in 1814 I have stated exceeded 25,000,000 *l.* in amount; which bills, or an amount equivalent thereto, were funded, in the absence of other means of liquidation or equalization.

336. Has the lending of this money to foreigners through the medium of these individuals, been prejudicial or otherwise to those engaged in productive industry?—It has been alternately beneficial and injurious. It has been beneficial pending their operation; but when they cease, and the interest which they create is attempted to be paid to the monied class, it is at the expense of the productive labour of the country, inasmuch as the interest is paid out of those means which otherwise would remain for the payment of the products of British labour exported.

337. At the period of the contractions of many of these foreign loans, has there not been a great impetus given to the exchange in mercantile transactions, and a large gain netted by the merchants of this country in their remittances from those countries, for and on behalf of whom the loan was contracted?—They have been exceedingly advantageous to the contractors and a class of agents, dealers and jobbers, and occasionally so to some of the merchants, pending their operation, but their ultimate result will be disastrous in the extreme, for reasons which I have previously explained.

338. May not the merchant in this country occasionally derive great benefit from these transactions without its ever reaching the manufacturer or the weaver?—Certainly.

339. Do you think the export merchants of England have prospered within the last 10 or 15 years?—As an aggregate body, I should say decidedly not; there are some exceptions; it is a melancholy fact, too well known, that almost every merchant in operation in 1815 has been ruined.

340. And are you aware that the system of the export of goods has materially changed from what it was 20 years ago?—Altogether changed, I am aware.

341. That it is now a speculation, and not a regular execution of orders?—There cannot be a doubt that the practice of agency has prevailed to some extent for the last half century, but it has considerably increased since the termination of the war, and more products of British labour are now exported as matters of adventure than as real sale and purchase.

342. Do

342. Do those adventures turn out to be discreet ones or are they often otherwise?—They are often very indiscreet and often ruinous. The first impetus to such transactions is the facility with which money is sometimes raised on adventures of that kind.

343. And is not that of itself extremely prejudicial to the labouring classes?—Exceedingly so.

344. Then if a stop was put to the negotiation of foreign loans, and the money was made to circulate in England instead of going abroad to raise us up competitors and rivals in foreign countries, would not that be an advantage to the productive classes in Great Britain?—I have so said.

345. You think a merchant or a stockholder may derive benefit from these loans, although they may be exceedingly prejudicial to the community at large, and especially so to the manufacturing operative?—Just so; they may be beneficial to the manufacturer in some degree without the benefit reaching the labourer.

346. Do you consider that the interest paid for these loans to foreign countries is like a tribute exacted from a conquered by a conquering country?—In its effects it is so, but the peculiarity of its operation entitles it to another term rather than that of tribute; in reality it resolves itself into a tax or tribute upon the productive labourer; it can be proved to be so most distinctly.

347. For instance, it is pretty much in its operation like the rent taken by an absentee landlord from Ireland and spent in this country or in foreign parts?—Precisely; a large portion of the operation of the export of Ireland actually resolves itself into tribute rather than a commercial operation.

348. And consequently whatever benefit individuals may gain during the time that this loan is going on, yet ultimately the continued payment of the interest of that loan, when transferred to another country, must be an exhaustion, to a certain extent, of the profits and industry of the country?—To all intents and purposes it is so, and in the severest extent that can possibly be supposed.

349. Has the Government given any facility to this system of making loans by fixing the price of gold at the standard of 3 *l.* 17 *s.* 10 ½ *d.* per ounce?—Undoubtedly it has.

350. That is, by making a forced cheapness of the most exportable commodity, it has made this country a great centre from which all the loan speculations of Europe have arisen?—Yes, it has made the productive labour of Great Britain the prey of the whole world.

351. That is your opinion?—It is so most undoubtedly; I beg to offer no opinion upon it further than to state the fact.

352. Then compelling the Bank of England to give gold at a cheap price has a tendency to keep down the price of all those commodities which are represented by the currency, the bills, and one-pound notes of the country?—It inevitably resolves itself into those operations which produce that effect.

353. Describe the effect?—The keeping down a fair reward for labour, of which the hand-loom weavers feel the pressure in a greater degree than any other class of labourers, with the exception of some of the agricultural labourers in those districts to which I have adverted.

354. If England had acted on the principle of taxing inventions and improvements in machinery for the last 20 years, would not such a practice have had a tendency to prevent foreign nations from imposing such high tariffs on English manufactures as now exist?—I think such a proceeding would have been exceedingly prejudicial if it had been carried into effect without the collateral propositions which I have advanced had been adopted also.

355. But do you think it would have had the effect of preventing foreign nations from imposing such high tariffs as they have imposed on English manufactures?—Probably not so high, yet so high as to be relatively injurious.

356. But if the price of manufactured goods had been kept up at the level of 20 years ago, the sale of those goods in America would have been much less than now?—That must have depended upon various causes. Such arrangements might have been made as would have sustained the prices of 20 years ago without diminishing the consumption; but any forced attempt to keep up high prices on one side without corresponding benefits on the other would tend to soon suspend the intercourse altogether, and prejudice the labourer by the opposite cause of diminution or cessation of demand for his labour.

357. You have recommended the plan of taxing inventions and improvements

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in machinery, and you are now asked whether you do not think if England had long acted on that plan it would not have tended to prevent foreign nations from being able to impose such high tariffs on the importation of British manufacture into their respective countries as they have now imposed?—I distinctly understand the form and bearing of the question put; the Committee will do me the justice to remember that when I first suggested the necessity, or rather the desirableness of taxing machinery, it was subject to some other propositions, connected with it. As a specific proposition I should say it is an inadmissible one, even now.

358. The taxing of machinery in England would have tended to keep up the prices of British manufactures, so that foreign nations could not have had the inducement or the power to levy such high tariffs as they have levied?—What the several nations of the world would have done would not have depended on our taxing machinery alone, they would have been influenced more by the terms on which we admitted their productions. The proposition for taxing machinery I first advanced as far back as 1819, and no consideration I have since bestowed on the subject has induced me to alter my view of it, providing the necessary external commutations of duties can be effected to justify it, which commutations I have no doubt may be effected if properly set about. The United States, which has been one of the greatest consumers of British productions, appears to have acted upon this principle, viz. that with every diminution of value to which the British manufacturer has yielded, they have successively increased their rates of duty.

359. Is it not the fall in the prices of British manufacture that has caused an outcry in America against the importation of these cheap manufactures, and induced the American government to take advantage of the cheap price of British manufactures to increase their tariffs?—Such has been the fact.

360. Are you aware that a very large proportion of the capital of the bank of the United States has been held on British account?—Certainly.

361. Do you consider that by such a holding the industry of this country or the industry of the United States is in any way prejudiced?—The industry of England has been prejudiced, inasmuch as the profits or dividends, like the interest on loans, are paid out of the proceeds of the imports, and therefore out of the means of payment for the products of British labour exported.

362. Twenty years ago the consumption of cotton in this country was 100,000,000 pounds, and the price for weaving was 14 *s.*; 10 years ago the consumption of cotton was 200,000,000 pounds, and the price of weaving was 7 *s.*?—Just so.

363. In 1834 the consumption of cotton was 300,000,000 pounds, and the price of weaving was 5 *s.* 6 *d.*; does it not appear to you to be a very singular anomaly, that with this amazing increase of production, which appears calculated to afford increased comforts, the distress of the weavers should go on increasing in the same ratio?—It ought not to have done so; but it is clear to me why it has done so, and it is also clear to me how the evil may be remedied. It resolves itself into an extraordinary exemplification of the efficiency of mechanical power, which, if properly regulated, will work as beneficially for the public at large as it is now working to their prejudice.

364. Then you wish the Committee to understand that one of the great causes of the distress which prevails among those who are interested in production has arisen from their means of consumption not keeping pace with the increase of production?—Just so, for want of proper regulation.

365. Now, leaving out the aid to be derived from foreigners or foreign trade, have we not within ourselves any means of restoring the labouring classes to a state of comfort?—There can be no doubt about the capability, inasmuch as the country never was in so high a condition of power and means as she at present is; and if it should be mutually and universally agreed on to adopt the principle of the Chinese and Japanese, or that of Mr. President Jefferson, that that country is the happiest which confines herself most to her own resources, and live entirely within ourselves, no doubt we have the power of doing it in a higher degree than any other community; but we must take into consideration that we cannot do it without in the first instance submitting to some privations. We cannot produce sugar, tea or cotton. We may go back to woollen and linen fabrics, and to malt liquor instead of tea and wine; but as far as the abstract question is specifically put, there can be no doubt but that we possess the means

in a higher degree than we ourselves ever before possessed them, and to a greater extent than any pre-existing community ever did possess them, to live in a high degree of comfort, independent of all external intercourse. I say this without being an advocate for the doctrine, or presuming to offer an opinion upon it either one way or the other.

366–7. Then having this increased power of production, what is wanting is a better power of distribution?—Exactly so; and, by way of example, I beg the attention of the Committee to a further consideration of the proposition for commuting a large proportion of the existing taxation for a tax on mechanical power, which I have previously shown has annihilated domestic manufacture in 800,000 to 1,000,000 families, and caused an increase of parochial taxation to the extent of 6,000,000*l.* to 7,000,000*l.* per annum. If, then, this amount of revenue was laid on and drawn from mechanical power, and re-distributed over the whole surface of the country which it has deprived of the means of comfort, I appeal again to the feelings and good sense of the Committee if such a measure could fail to produce other than a renovating influence through all the involved relations of society. I therefore most earnestly call upon the Committee to urge the recommendation of such a regard to our external relations as may lead to the adoption of a large commutation of existing taxation for a tax on mechanical power.

368. We have a given quantity of money to pay for the commodities which this country produces, and which has not varied to any great extent in amount since Mr. Peel's Bill came into operation?—Just so.

369. Is there no means of diverting more of this money into a channel for the payment of labour, and abstracting it from other uses to which it is now applied, without doing any injustice to any one?—If by the question, it is meant to be asked whether by any special or direct act of legislation higher rates of wages for labour could be established, I would, in answer, refer to the Spitalfields regulatory Act, under which that district presented relatively less privation and less derangement of every kind, among the employers as well as the employed, than any other district of the kingdom; and some such principle as the Spitalfields regulatory Act, made general to the whole kingdom, might be advantageous to all parties: but, dependant as our manufactures have become on external demand, no sensible relief to the weaver can be afforded, without some external negotiation for obtaining a remission or modification of the inordinate imposts which at present prevail in the several countries of the world; and it will be much better to obtain relief for the labourer in the way I have proposed, by the adoption of those great general principles which must lead to an improvement in their condition, rather than by attempting to do it by any specific measure.

370. When you speak of general principles, do you mean your answer to apply to those propositions which you have submitted to the Committee, such as prevailing on foreigners to do away with or modify those excessive duties on our manufactures, over which foreigners we have no control?—I do mean the propositions which I have already advanced; and, without expressing any opinion on the advantages or disadvantages of an external commerce, in comparison with an internal one, I beg to fix the attention of the Committee to the fact that one-third of our wove fabrics are for external consumption, and that our imported products are equal in value to one-fourth or more of the total value of the soil of Great Britain; any measures of legislation, therefore, without reference to our external relations, must prove futile. But the means of relief are not confined to any one particular source. If you bring the comforts of life more within the reach of the labourer, by remission or commutation of duties, and keep his wages from undergoing further reduction, he is benefited as much as though his wages were raised and commodities kept at the same price; but if you can relieve him both ways, so much the better. The proper adjustment of the relations of society consists in duly balancing or compensating the several parts or classes; and if the Committee wish me to come again before them, I will bring with me a document that will explain the principle by which I have been led to those conclusions that have induced the propositions which I have this day submitted; and if the Committee will but bestow the necessary time and attention to the subject, I have no doubt of their being brought to see that the most substantial relief may be afforded to the hand-loom weavers and other suffering classes of labourers, and that without in the least degree entrenching on any existing interest, but in a way to advance

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the interest of all classes. But there is no one measure that will affect this; it is a combination of measures, all pursued in relation to each other.

371. Are you aware that it was given in evidence before the Hand loom Weavers' Committee last Session, that the weavers, who consist of nearly 1,000,000 human beings, are suffering the most severe privations, not from any want of employment, but for want of fair remunerating wages?—I am quite sensible of the fact, painfully so.

372. And are you aware that the witnesses who came up, almost one and all, attributed it to a system of competition prevailing among the manufacturers, which has been carried on to such an extent that one individual among 100 manufacturers can bring the 99 down to any standard he establishes?—I quite understand all that; I am quite familiar with the process. It is hardly possible for any individual to be more keenly sensible than I am of all the effects that have been produced by the competition which a facility of production has engendered; and I pledge myself to the Committee to meet every possible difficulty that can be suggested or that may present itself.

373. Will you admit that one manufacturer can bring down the wages which the other 99 may pay?—That is a question of degree, I think. There may be one manufacturer, the extent of whose operations may counteract the effects produced by 99 others. There can be no doubt that one individual may counteract the good intentions of a large number.

374. You agree to the principle?—If a manufacturer employ 1,000 labourers, and 99 only 10 each, who may be willing to pay 5 *s.* for labour, which the hundredth gets done for 3 *s.*, the one would break down the 99.

375. At present the controlling power of regulating wages rests in the hands of a very small minority?—Just so.

376. Can you point out any mode whereby the controlling power might be placed in the hands of those who are disposed to pay good wages, and taken out of the hands of the small minority?—There can be no doubt that if some such Act as the Spitalfields regulatory Bill was made general and applicable to the whole weaving operations of the country, it would work beneficially, as far as all our internal relations are concerned, but its advantages would soon become counteracted by the extent of our external operations, unless some modification of those inordinate rates of duty, which we have so many times before adverted to, can be obtained. If the external operation is to be continued, and I do not see how it can conveniently be dispensed with, regard must imperatively be paid to the endeavour of obtaining either the remission or some modification of the duties in question, before we shall be justified in establishing any system which has exclusively an internal object in view, either such as the Spitalfields regulatory Bill or taxing of machinery, that would tend to a scale of prices for labour which our external operations would not sustain. At present, presuming the question applies to the Petition which I believe the sufferers in this case have presented to the Committee, that some regulatory board, under the sanction of Parliament, should be established for the regulation of wages, advocate as I am for regulation, I am perfectly satisfied that such a measure, abstractedly applied, cannot maintain itself.

377. But suppose the amount was fixed by the manufacturers themselves, by having a controlling power placed in the hands of a majority of manufacturers paying the best rate of wages, and establishing what they pay as a minimum for a period of three or six months, the weaver who received 5 *s.* 6 *d.* in 1834, by such an operation as that would be very long before he got back to 14 *s.*; can you see that any evil would arise from a regulation of that sort being attempted, in order that a retrograde movement might be established by the manufacturers themselves?—It would be liable to be counteracted in two ways: first, it would lead to a more extended application of mechanical power. As a manufacturer, if I agree to pay 10 *s.* for labour, where I now pay only 5 *s.*, that is an additional inducement for me to extend the application of mechanical power. And second, it would tend to diminish the external demand. If all our operations were internal, you never could fall into a mistake by enhancing the remuneration for labour, the effect of the re-expenditure always acting in proportion to the sum paid for labour.

378. But perhaps you are not aware that where mechanical power does not produce any cloth, such as the fabrics you have been speaking of, the same depreciation has taken place, and that in silks, to which the power-looms have not been applied, in linens to which the power-looms have been very partially indeed applied,

plied, in muslins, and in fancy and figured goods, the same reduction in the wages of the weaver has taken place?—I think that may be sufficiently accounted for by the excess of the supply of labour which the introduction of machinery has caused; the transition from one branch of weaving to another being like bringing fresh persons into an employment entirely new. Those are questions in detail, however, which a person more immediately conversant with the subject would be better able to answer than I am, as my observations are only general, and apply more to generalities than to particular cases.

379. But going on the supposition that the power-loom can never be brought to produce cambrics, silks and linen, do you suppose there could be any fair objection raised to an attempt being made to regulate the wages of these weavers?—Not the slightest objection to the attempt; but as far as the articles enter into foreign consumption, its success for the end proposed is problematical.

380. A self-adjusting regulation?—I should only warn both those who propose, and those who are willing to be satisfied with the proposition, of the doubt of sustaining it; concurring, if you please, most sincerely in the propriety of making the attempt.

381. You would warn them of the doubt of sustaining it, unless the great remedies you propose were brought into operation?—Unless something more commensurate with all the circumstances of the country were resorted to.

382. Would your doubt of sustaining the proposition be removed, provided you were convinced in your own mind that machinery cannot be so applied as to supersede the use of the hand-loom in producing these different articles?—As far as the products of the hand-loom enter into foreign consumption, it is not a competition with labour by which they are counteracted, but a competition with inordinate rates of duty; therefore any specific measure for enhancing the rate of wages carries in itself a tendency to its own defeat, as far as the external operation is concerned.

383. You mean to say that the power-loom coming into competition with the hand-loom throws a good many hands out of employ, and therefore has the effect of diminishing the rate of wages?—Yes; and the supply of labour, where such an extent of mechanical power is in operation, has a tendency to increase production beyond the means of consumption. Consumption, in relation to our means of production of certain articles, soon finds a limit among our population, comparatively speaking limited, and renders a due regard to our external relations the more imperative.

384. So that you think the application of the power-loom in one great fabric extends its operation to all others?—Undoubtedly it does.

385. In a circuitous manner?—It cannot fail to do so.

386. Can you state that the increase of machinery in this country has actually had the effect of depressing labour to a considerable extent?—It has depressed labour to the extent of annihilating domestic industry in 1,000,000 families at the least.

387. But, on the contrary, has it not taken up labour at an earlier age than it otherwise would have done, and so given employment to a greater mass of population than could have been called into operation under any other system?—I am happy that this question has been put to me, in so far as it involves one of the most important considerations to which the attention of Englishmen can at this time possibly be directed, and affords me an opportunity of exposing one of the most fatal mistakes in which the country has for 20 years indulged, that of the supposed preponderance of the manufacturing over the agricultural population. I have previously given evidence of the great change in all the social relations of life, to which the concentration of manufacture has given rise; and I have previously given testimony of my high approbation of the census of 1831, to the arrangement of which I was no party. Whatever credit is due to any individual, for the mass of interesting information which it contains, is due to Mr. Rickman, the assistant clerk of your House, under whose immediate superintendence the 16,500 Returns were collated and arranged, for the completion of which no praise which I can offer is sufficient eulogy; but that census came in in confirmation of a most elaborate inquiry which I had previously made. In the absence of all official data, I had previously arrived at results which the census confirms; but owing to the inefficient manner in which the censuses of 1811 and 1821 were prepared, the country was led to suppose that we had 1,500,000 manufacturers and traders to 900,000 agriculturists. It turns out, however, by the census of

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1831, that whilst there are 1,243,000 male persons, 20 years of age and upwards, dependent exclusively on agriculture, there are less than half a million actually employed in what strictly comes under the denomination of manufacture. Hence, whilst 30 or 35 years ago from 800,000 to 1,000,000 families were deriving, though not their entire subsistence, such portion of their means from manufacturing labour as supplied them with all those articles of subsistence which constitute the comforts of life, they are now deprived of them, owing to the introduction of machinery and the concentration of the manufacturing operations. The result of my inquiry is exhibited on a single page of the Paper which I presented to the House last Session, which results are fully confirmed by the detailed census of 1831; and as I have been exposed to a good deal of obloquy and imputation of jobbing with respect to the vote of 2,500 guineas with which the House honoured me in the Session of 1833, I will appeal to the results exhibited on that single page in justification of the vote. The cost to me of arriving at these results alone exceeded the whole amount which I received, and had the Government been called upon to have performed the same service, I am satisfied that the cost would have been twice or three times that amount; nor was it half equal to the expenses which I have actually incurred in the pursuit of those inquiries which have led me to appear before this Committee to-day. The single page in question developes a more important truth than Englishmen have ever before been made acquainted with, and demonstrates that there are less than half the number now deriving part of their subsistence, and such part as would constitute all the comforts of the family, from manufacturing labour than there were 40 years ago.

388. There was a large class of agricultural labourers partly employed in manufactures?—Yes, and it was from the manufacturing operation that what may be considered the comforts of the family were derived. The operation was, to change the yarn which was given out in wool by the shopkeepers weekly, and afterwards carried back to the shop to be exchanged for such articles as the shop supplied. It is the deprivation of these comforts that has effected such a fearful change, not only in the pecuniary but in the social and moral condition of the peasantry of the country.

389. Did your inquiry extend to any foreign countries; with reference to France, the next manufacturing community, have you observed that a similar tendency is shown?—France has not carried her manufacturing operations sufficiently far for the effects to develope themselves; France must multiply her operations sixfold before she brings herself on a parallel with us. Up to a given point mechanical power takes up the labour as fast as it is displaced or deprived of its local occupation, and France has not yet gone much beyond, even if she has attained that point, which in England has long since been past: while the imposing effect of the concentrated operation, and its progressive increase, deludes the understanding of partial inquirers; the one is visible to the eye by being brought into a focus, while the 800,000 families, whom the concentrated operation has deprived of the comforts of life, are spread over the whole of Great Britain.

390. Your proposition is, that it is not just that manual power should be severely and heavily taxed, while what is called mechanical power is comparatively untaxed?—It is neither just nor politic; it is as impolitic as it is unjust.

391. From what data do you found your statement of 1,000,000 families being formerly employed in manufacture?—The census of 1811 gives 895,898 families employed exclusively in agriculture; and I have said that every farm-house, every agricultural labourer's cottage, and the habitation of almost every smith, carpenter, mason and wheelwright in the rural districts was more or less a manufacturing establishment, exceeding collectively more than 1,000,000 in number.

392. Then there is no Return which states there were 1,000,000 families exclusively engaged in manufactures?—There is not, nor have I said that there was, *exclusively* engaged; but my analysis of the census of 1811 and 1821 demonstrates all that I have said on the subject, and the census of 1831 confirms it, and shows that while 1,243,000 male persons, 20 years of age and upwards, in Great Britain derived subsistence exclusively from agriculture, 404,000 only derived subsistence exclusively from manufacturing; while in Ireland the agriculturists are as 1,227 to only 80 manufacturers. Upwards of 600,000 persons employed in mines, quarries, the fisheries, on roads, canals, &c., and 1,160,000 engaged as shopkeepers and handicraftsmen having been in 1811 and 1821 classed as manufacturers, may be regarded as the cause in a great degree of the delusion which has prevailed

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prevailed in respect to the supposed or assumed preponderance of the manufacturing over the agricultural population. The specific occupations of the 1,160,000 shopkeepers, &c. I have classed and exhibited at one point of view in the Papers delivered to Parliament last Session.

393. You mean subdivisions of the different occupations?—Yes.

Martis, 31° *die Martii*, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. *Joseph C. Milner*, called in; and Examined.

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394. WHERE do you live?—Dalton, near Huddersfield.

395. What line of business are you in?—Fancy waistcoat manufacturer.

396. Is that done by hand-loom weavers?—Yes.

397. What is the present state of the hand-loom weavers in the district where you reside?—They are well employed, at what we consider fairish remuneration.

398. How far is Dalton from Huddersfield?—Two miles.

399. Is it in the township of Huddersfield?—In the township of Kirkheaton.

400. Can you at all state what is the average rate of wages per week for the hand-loom weavers?—No, I have not got a statement of that description in my possession. I had no time from the communication. I had to consult with the different manufacturers on the subject. I have a list of a certain number of our own weavers, from which I could furnish, in the course of a day or two, data; but I only collected it just before I set off, and I have it not now in such a state as that I could present it to the Committee at this moment.

401. How many weavers do you employ?—I should think from about 200 to 300.

402. Have you not a general notion of their gains; taking 200 or 300, how much do you pay a week for weavers?—I have not any general information on that subject at this moment.

403. You, for instance, employ 200 men; you know how many weavers you employ?—Yes.

404. How much do you pay a week for wages?—Our wages are mixed up with other descriptions of wages; I cannot answer that question correctly at the present moment.

405. Do you say they are fully employed, at a fair wage?—Yes.

406. What do you consider a fair wage?—I did look at a few particulars before I set off; I think it is from 15 *s.*, or perhaps from 13 *s.* to 20 *s.* a week.

407. How many hours a day do the hand-loom weavers work in your district?—It is a domestic manufactory; we have no moral control over the individuals, but we give out the work at a certain period, and it is brought back at a certain period, without any regard to the time.

408. You perhaps have some notion of the average hours of labour?—It is extremely irregular and uncertain; some will work early in the day, and others will spend a portion of the day and work at night.

409. The average rate of wages depends upon a man's own industry?—Yes.

410. Industrious men will earn 15 *s.* a week?—Yes.

411. Is the hand-loom weaving in the Huddersfield district confined to fancy trade?—The fancy trade predominates, I think, in the neighbourhood; but there is a considerable quantity of cloth weaving.

412. Are as good wages paid in the other lines as in the fancy line?—I cannot answer that question correctly; I should think pretty nearly.

413. Do you think the present state of the hand-loom weavers is better or worse than it was ten years ago?—I could not answer that question correctly without I take into consideration the relative price of provisions. I should think they are as well off as they were 10 years ago, taking that into consideration.

414. Do you judge merely from the price of the necessaries of life, or by your own eye?—I judge from both; from the relative price of provisions and from the general appearance and situation of the working people.

415. Do you ever visit their houses?—Occasionally.

416. Have

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416. Have they as much furniture and are they as well clothed as they used to be?—I think so.

417. Do you think they attend church as regularly as they used to do?—I cannot speak to that.

418. Is it your impression, from what you see, that they are as well dressed on the Sunday as they used to be?—There is a considerable degree of dissipation in those who have the means of attending a place of worship, and who neglect to avail themselves of it.

419. Do you mean to say they attend places of worship less than they used to do?—I think that is the truth, on the whole.

420. Can you assign any cause for that?—The state of the country, in reference to beer-shops, appears to me to be one of the prevailing causes.

421. Do you think that the men go to beer-shops because they are better off or worse off; do you think they go there as a relief from a distressed state of mind, or because they have more money in their pockets?—I could hardly answer that question correctly; I should think both causes prevailed.

422. Is there a different rate of wages paid by the manufacturers in your district for the same description of work?—I think there is a pretty generally understood rate of wages that is paid in the fancy manufacture generally.

423. Do you mean they pay at the same rate?—I think that is so. I intended to have made some inquiries, but I came off so suddenly that I had not the opportunity of making those inquiries.

424. When did that understanding first commence?—I think about two years ago.

425. In consequence of what did they proceed to come to such an understanding as that?—There was considerable discontent amongst the weavers and complaints that some persons were giving lower wages than others.

426. And it was in consequence of the complaint of weavers receiving a low rate of wages that this understanding was come to on their part with the masters?—There was no meeting of the masters, nor was there any pledge on the part of the masters that such and such wages should be paid.

427. No written understanding?—No written understanding.

428. But a wish was expressed by the weavers generally that they should have such and such wages?—Yes, and that wish I think to a considerable degree was complied with.

429. Has that generally unwritten understanding on the part of the masters been broken in upon by individual masters?—I believe there are one or two masters that live at a distance, more in the country, they pay perhaps a penny a dozen less; I have been informed so.

430. Do you find that those exceptions disturb the general understanding?—Some few observations were made at the meeting of manufacturers in reference to that subject. It was observed in the cloth trade that a lower rate of wages was paid in the neighbourhood of Holmfirth, a neighbouring district, than was paid in the immediate neighbourhood of Huddersfield.

431. Did it cause any great inconvenience, this breaking in upon the general understanding?—One of the observations that was made at that meeting was, that the workmen could live at a less rate with their families in the country district than they could in the immediate vicinity of the town.

432. Are the Committee to understand that the general understanding which was come to by the masters was successful in this instance, as to paying an equal rate of wages?—Not completely.

433. In what way was it unsuccessful in the cases you have mentioned?—There were a few individuals in a neighbourhood some distance from Huddersfield, and some persons who made fancy articles, who paid less wages at a distance from the town.

434. If the line had been drawn closer round Huddersfield, so as to exclude the place you mentioned, do you see any reason to believe this experiment would have been unsuccessful?—I am not aware that it pervades to any extent except at those distant places.

435. Have there been frequent reductions of the wages of weavers making the same article, within your experience?—In times of general distress there have been instances.

436. What

436. What should you describe the last 15 years; a period of prosperity or adversity?—It has been exceedingly various.

437. Have there been many changes during that time?—Many.

438. Of reduction of wages?—Yes.

439. Has there been any tendency upwards as well as downwards?—Yes.

440. Can you describe the period when they advanced?—The period to which I allude in the first instance, when weavers' wages were prosperous, was the period succeeding 1825, the panic.

441. Wages rose immediately after 1825?—No, the weavers' wages were higher previous to 1825.

442. That is in 1822, 1823 and 1824, the weavers were well off?—In 1823 and 1824.

443. Since that time they have been worse off?—Yes; for some period of time after that period weavers were very ill off.

444. What manufacturers take the lead in making reductions of wages; those paying the higher rate of wages, or those who are in the habit of paying the lower rate of wages?—The larger manufacturers may have means of keeping their workpeople employed at better wages in bad times than the smaller manufacturers may have, and I have no doubt but the small manufacturers are driven from sheer necessity, betwixt those to whom they have to sell their goods and those whom they have to manufacture them, to get them done at as low a rate as possible.

445. Then it is no test of the prosperous state of trade if the large manufacturer keeps his hands at work, because that may be caused by the expectation of better times arriving?—Sometimes that is the case; and I do not think that in any neighbourhood amongst manufacturers greater sums of money are paid to keep their workpeople employed in difficult times than in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield.

446. You think that the manufacturers have sustained great loss in consequence of keeping their hands together?—Yes.

447. You do not think they have kept their hands together in consequence of the profitable state of the trade, but rather in the expectation of a profitable state of trade returning?—Yes.

448. Does it happen to come within your knowledge whether the weavers are generally employed more now by large capitalists than by small capitalists, compared to what they used to be?—I think, from an observation that escaped in private conversation with a person who deals in the raw materials, that there is a fewer quantity of smaller manufacturers than there was at a certain period.

449. Is it your opinion, that in consequence of the adverse state of trade, the small masters are beaten down, compared with the larger masters?—That is extremely difficult to ascertain, for the term "beating down" is extremely ambiguous, especially in reference to fancy articles; for let the article be ever so good, if the article becomes unfashionable, the manufacturer may be compelled to sell it at a low price.

450. Then you think the fancy trade is hardly a fair test?—Yes.

451. Because of the great change in the fashion?—Yes.

452. Would it be a benefit, both to the manufacturers and the weavers, if some plan could be devised which would improve the wages of the weaver and promote a more uniform rate of wages among the manufacturers?—That is with me extremely doubtful.

453. Will you give me your reason?—So far as the knowledge of the different rate of wages paid by the different manufacturers could be known, at certain periods, I think there would be some advantage connected with the trade in general.

454. You mean by the publication of a list of wages?—Yes; but the requiring those manufacturers to pay the same rate of wages, under all circumstances, for a certain period to come, appears to me exceedingly doubtful and dangerous.

455. Would not that depend on the period of time to which that return was confined?—I am speaking of any period.

456. You think it would not be advantageous to adjust a rate of wages for any term, far or short?—Not to require the manufacturer under all circumstances to pay the same rate of wages for a certain given period; and I will state to you a simple reason why. The rate of wages which we give for plain work in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield, I believe, at present, is pretty near 1*s.* a dozen

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hanks. From a statement which I saw in the "Leeds Times" the other day, I observed that the rate of wages given in Halifax and Bradford, where steam-looms are in operation, that 10*d.* per score, or a halfpenny a hank is given. Halifax is about eight miles from Huddersfield, and Bradford is about 12 miles from Huddersfield.

457. Have you any further reason to assign?—Another reason that I assign as an objection to that mode of proceeding is this, that at present, amongst the principal cloth manufacturers in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield they are introducing power-looms; I believe one manufacturer has already got about 70 power-looms; there are others too that are setting them to work, and I have no doubt that if those machines are generally introduced into the neighbourhood, that it will compel the hand-loom manufacturer to reduce his wages very considerably.

458. Has the power-loom ever come into competition with the hand-loom fancy trade before this time?—An attempt has been made to introduce the power-loom into the fancy waistcoat manufacture; however, such is the complication with which manufactures of that description is attended, and such is the frequency of the changes that attend the manufacture of that article, that I believe the experiment has failed, and been attended with considerable loss to the parties using it.

459. Is there any reason why it is more likely to answer now than heretofore?—In plain work, it appears, as far as I can judge from the information I have received, likely to succeed; they are turning off in one concern about six hand-loom weavers in a fortnight.

460. Your observations, in regard to the power-loom, apply only to the plain trade, and not to the fancy trade?—At present; we cannot tell how soon individuals may be successful in weaving fancy things by power-loom: but I beg leave to state also, there are a considerable number of articles made that are considered fancy articles, that are plain work, that might readily be wove by a steam-loom, and indeed I think all that description of work for which the country is at present paying 1*s.* a dozen.

461. Did you not state that the hand-loom weavers in the plain trade were as well off as the hand-loom weavers in the fancy trade?—I am very little acquainted with the cloth trade; I could not answer that question correctly, but I think they are.

462. If that steam-loom has never come into competition with the hand-loom in the fancy trade, can the steam-loom be said to be one cause of the adversity that is existing in the hand-loom trade?—I could not say, because the steam-loom has never come into competition with the fancy trade as yet.

463. With that part of the fancy trade which, being called fancy, is really plain trade?—I beg leave distinctly to state, no part of the fancy trade has as yet come in direct competition with steam-looms.

464. Did the failures in the attempt to introduce the steam-loom apply to articles which are called fancy, when they are really plain or really fancy articles?—It applied to the really fancy articles.

465. You stated, in answer to a question, "Would it be a benefit to both the manufacturers and the weavers if some plan could be devised that would improve the wages of the weaver, and promote a more uniform rate of wages amongst the manufacturers?" you stated, in answer to that, there are different circumstances in some neighbouring towns; for instance, at Halifax; there are certain circumstances in connexion with Halifax, there are other circumstances in connexion with Bradford, which militate against their coming into any arrangement which might be thought advisable at Huddersfield: but if those arrangements and regulations were confined to each of those towns, and each of them were to form a separate basis for its own arrangement, will you see the same objection then?—What I meant respecting those towns was, that in those towns the steam-loom and hand-loom are in direct competition with each other, working in the same town; but in Halifax there are two very extensive manufacturers, two brothers; the one weaves by power-looms and the other by hand-looms.

466. What is the present state of competition between the hand-loom and the power-loom in Halifax?—I am not so well acquainted with the trade as to know; but the fact is, that they have to sell their goods against each other, therefore they must bring the rate of wages as near in point of comparison as possible, in order to obtain a profit.

467. From your knowledge, can you say whether the hand-loom wages are as

good at Halifax, where the hand-loom comes into competition with the steam-loom, as they are at Huddersfield, in the fancy trade, where the steam-loom does not come in competition?—The information I gave a few moments ago as to that was, that the wages at Huddersfield for the fancy plain work is double for a certain description of plain work, which is at present generally given in the trade, 1 *s.* a dozen.

468. Are the Halifax wages to hand-loom weavers, where the steam-loom comes in competition, as high as the hand-loom weavers where the steam-loom does not come into competition?—From the statement I saw in the "Leeds Times" last week, a certain description of plain work at Halifax and Bradford was just 10 *d.* per score, that is a halfpenny per hank. We pay 1 *s.* a dozen, that is 1 *d.* per hank.

469. Are the Committee to infer from that that the wages of hand-loom weavers are double at Huddersfield to what they are at Halifax?—That is the conclusion that I drew from reading the statement in the "Leeds Times."

470. Do you ever hear greater complaints at Halifax amongst the hand-loom weavers than at Huddersfield?—The complaint I saw in the newspaper was printed in the "Leeds Times" of last week, giving a statement of the various prices the hand-loom weavers received.

471. Cannot you speak from your general knowledge?—I have no general knowledge as to that.

472. What was your impression? Did it not strike you that it was highly probable that it was incorrect?—No.

473. Have you ever known, of your own knowledge, of any instance where there has been as great discrepancies of wages as that to which you allude as recorded in the "Leeds Times," within the same range of distance from one place to another?—The difference is equally great in reference to calico weaving at present.

474. Within the same distance?—No; a farther distance than that.

475. Then your answer would be, you are not aware of it?—Yes.

476. What distance is Huddersfield from Halifax?—Eight miles.

477. And what distance from Bradford?—Twelve miles.

478. You have stated that it is your belief that at Bradford and Halifax they are paying a halfpenny a hank for weaving, whereas at Huddersfield you are paying 1 *d.*?—I told you upon what my belief was founded; it was from the Leeds newspaper.

479. Do you know, of your own knowledge, of any great application being made from Halifax for work at Huddersfield, where those better wages are paid?—No.

480. Are they the same goods that they work up?—No.

481. What is the difference?—I beg leave to state, with reference to the plain trade, there may be a considerable variation in the kind of goods made at that rate of wages; formerly we paid by the yard, about three or four years ago; we pay all now by the dozen; whether the man puts three hanks, or four, five, six or seven, or whatever description of work it may be, however it varies, it is so much per dozen hanks that are given to the trade.

482. Would the same weaver, who at Halifax gets only a halfpenny a hank, be capable of doing the same work for which a weaver at Huddersfield, according to your statement, is paid 1 *d.*?—I know nothing of the work at Halifax.

483. Is it desirable, in your opinion, that the power of regulating wages should be given to such masters as wish to uphold wages, and taken out of the hands of those who avail themselves of every opportunity to reduce wages?—I think it would be unjust in principle that one class of masters should be empowered to regulate the rate of wages.

484. Is it not very much on the same principle as the understanding you have before described between the hand-loom masters in the district of Huddersfield?—I believe such an understanding exists.

485. Did that understanding grow out of a meeting of masters or of men?—It did not grow out of a meeting of masters.

486. It grew out of the natural course of things?—No, it grew out of a communication from the workmen that such and such wages should be paid.

487. I think you stated the masters had communications with each other, not at a public meeting, and they came to that understanding?—No.

488. It was a voluntary arrangement, come to in consequence of certain com-

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plaints and applications made by the weavers to the masters?—I believe there was about 1 *d.* a dozen given additional throughout the trade, with some little allowance for dressing warps.

489. Was the rise in wages of 1 *d.* in consequence of the increased demand for goods, or was it in consequence merely of the application of the weavers for better wages?—I think the nearest truth would be that both causes operated.

490. When did that advance take place?—Speaking from memory, I should think about two years since.

491. Are you now speaking of fancy work only?—Yes.

492. Such as you manufacture yourself?—Yes.

493. Were there many unemployed labourers and many unemployed weavers at the time the advance took place?—I think not.

494. Is that price still maintained?—With few exceptions, I believe it is.

495. How many different descriptions of goods are you in the habit of making, which come under the denomination of fancy work?—Why, I believe no manufacturer in the neighbourhood could tell you, because there is a very considerable variety even amongst what we call the cloth-makers. The difference of fancy trowsers, some of them were observing at the meeting, though there were not above a dozen or 15, that such was the variety of the sorts, and the changes that were continually taking place, one thing being wanted in a few weeks, and then a contrary article being wanted, that it would be almost impossible that any rate of wages could be regularly published.

496. Do those different descriptions of cloth all pass by some name, by which they are known?—Yes; but they keep continually varying; one article may go out and another come in.

497. That is as to pattern?—Yes.

498. When you give out your work to your weaver, you tell the weaver what he shall have for weaving that work?—Generally.

499. Then the work you give out passes under some denomination, name or description, which the weaver and the manufacturer both know it by; and the wage which he is to receive for the work is as well understood by both parties?—Generally; I believe a number of exceptions may exist in reference to the introduction of a completely new article, for then perhaps neither the master nor the weaver know exactly its value of weaving till it has been mutually ascertained.

500. And how is that ascertained?—By communication with the workmen.

501. The workmen and masters together fix a price?—Yes.

502. Is that when he has executed one web?—Yes; sometimes the manufacturer may take the evidence of two or three workmen on the same subject.

503. Then what difficulty would there be in ascertaining what wages are paid for all the different descriptions of manufacture that are made at Huddersfield, when they all pass under some name by which they are distinguished, and known both to the weaver and the manufacturer?—I think it is practicable; but it would be attended with considerable inconvenience, as some of the manufacturers said at the meeting; though, with respect to fancy waistcoating, I think there would be fewer difficulties than in fancy trowsers.

504. Can you suggest to the Committee any measure that would effect the object in view, of regulating the wages from time to time?—I know of none that would effectually do it.

505. Do you conceive, in your opinion, that legislative interference is necessary to attain that end?—I think whatever legislative interference could be obtained to require in general an equality of wages for the same work, would be desirable.

506. You think it would be desirable?—The publication of the rate of wages, so that the general rate of wages would be understood, would be desirable; for I believe considerable evils have arisen in consequence of individuals going on for a considerable period in making goods of the same description at a lower rate than other manufacturers in the neighbourhood.

507. Do you think there is any difficulty in the way of accomplishing that end which you think so desirable, of the publication of the rate of wages, with a view to produce the same rate of wages for the same sort of work?—I conceive there are not many difficulties in the publication of the rate of wages; but in compelling the manufacturer for a given period to give, under all circumstances, the same rate of wages, I conceive there are very considerable difficulties.

508. Are

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508. Are opposing circumstances likely to occur in the course of a week?—A week is a very short time.

509. A fortnight?—No, perhaps not.

510. Then it is merely a question as to the length of period for which those tables should be in operation?—I think so; that is my private opinion.

511. Do you think the price paid for weaving in your district could be obtained by a schedule of inquiry, directed to the overseer or some other parish officer?—I think it would be very imperfectly done in the hands of an overseer.

512. Can you suggest any better party to whom the Legislature could apply for a trial of this kind?—I think it should be some person in whom the workmen and the master have pretty general confidence.

513. A sort of local inspector, appointed by both parties?—I should think so.

514. Could the quantity of goods made by each manufacturer be obtained in the same way?—I should think it might.

515. After such information has been obtained, would it not be easy to select out of the return the fewest number of manufacturers who collectively make one-half of the goods manufactured in each district?—I should think so.

516. Supposing the number to be one-fifth (supposing the party producing the half on one side 20, and the other party being 4), supposing the number to be one-fifth, would there be anything unfair in selecting a majority out of that one-fifth who are paying the highest wages, and fix the average wage paid by such majority as the lowest wage that shall be paid by every manufacturer in that district for that sort of work, until another periodical return be called for?—My conviction is, that it would be to that manufacturer extremely unjust, if he was placed in circumstances of competition with the steam-loom with that particular article of goods, as to compel him to give a lower rate of wages.

517. But they are all in competition with the steam-loom; all these parties are supposed to be in competition with the steam-loom; they are parties who are all hand-loom weavers; and the question refers to this, whether you may take the smallest number of inquiries, producing the half of the goods manufactured in the district by the hand-loom, and whether you may not strike an average of the wages of the majority of that fewer number producing the half of the goods, and make that the average rate of wages in the district?—I still recur to the same position, that my conviction is, that where the master and the workman both agree to go on at the same rate of wages, the one agrees to take and the other agrees to pay, that no legislative measure ought to interfere between them.

518. Do not the weavers of your district complain of the lowness of wages?—I am not aware there is much complaint at present.

519. Are you aware that petitions have been sent up to the House of Commons representing that the weaving at Huddersfield is very inadequately paid for?—I am aware that petitions were sent two or three years ago, and I am aware a very considerable number of persons were nearly unemployed at that time.

520. You find when trade is in a depressed state, certain manufacturers offering work to the weavers at a less rate than when the trade was brisk. Suppose, for instance, in very flat times, when goods cannot be sold as fast as they are produced, then you find certain manufacturers are offering work to the weavers who may be discharged in consequence of the flatness arising from there not being the usual demand for goods; you find certain manufacturers offering work to the weavers who are discharged at a less rate of wages than they received when things were brisk?—I do not think the weavers suffer much in that respect. I have endeavoured to explain in what way fancy-waistcoating weavers suffer principally in bad times. It is not altogether, though it sometimes happens, from the reduction of the amount of wages, but from the considerable loss they sustain in being required frequently to wait for the patterns; the times they have to wait to get work, and the considerable waiting and delays that occur, the changing of patterns, and a variety of circumstances that require them to wait a considerable period of time before they get to the regular work; and frequently in bad times the weaver is sent without work for a week, sometimes for a fortnight, without any reduction of wages, but that considerably reduces the average rate of the wages notwithstanding.

521. Are the intervals of late years longer in which he is out of work than they used to be?—It varies according to circumstances continually; for instance, if the manufacturer has a certain number of weavers going on on certain work, he may have nothing for them, and then he says, "You must wait a week;" and if

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an order comes, perhaps he may get work in a day or two; if not, otherwise he must wait nearly a fortnight.

522. You have found that sometimes you are obliged to discharge your weavers because you cannot sell the goods to a sufficient extent?—They are not exactly discharged.

523. You know that at times weavers are discharged because there is no work?—Yes.

524. When those times arrive, do you not find some of the master manufacturers are always anxious to employ those men at a lower rate of wages?—No, I am not aware of it; there are two modes of proceeding with the manufacturers in our district; that is, perhaps one manufacturer may say, "I will continue the manufacture at a less rate of wages;" another may say, "I will make a less quantity of goods, and I will send them without work for a week."

525. You stated the wages fell in 1825?—Yes.

526. What was the cause of that?—The panic, in the first place.

527. There was no demand for the goods?—No. I was in this town in 1825, when the whole of the fancy goods from Stansfield, Bridges & Co.'s estate was coming back from the Continent to be sold in this town by auction.

528. There was a larger quantity of goods produced on that occasion than you could find a market for; the consequence was that the weavers went without employment, and when they were taken into employment again, it was at reduced wages: that was the case?—Yes, they were reduced something.

529. You have known times of that description frequently?—Yes.

530. That certain manufacturers took advantage of weavers being out of employment, and offered them work at less than the usual rate?—Yes.

531. Do not you find that both injurious to the manufacturer who holds stocks of goods in hand as well as to the other weavers who are in employment; the wages of the one are depressed, and the stock of the manufacturer is depressed?—Yes, that would take place occasionally.

532. Then do you think it desirable if some system could be devised by which the rate of wages could always be kept up?—I think a periodical publication of wages would be desirable; but that the manufacturer should be compelled for a certain period afterwards to pay the same rate of wages, under all the circumstances in which he would be placed, I think would place the manufacturer frequently in very great difficulties.

533. Will you explain the difficulty to which you refer?—It is on account of unprincipled manufacturers giving a lower rate of wages that I think the publication of the rate of wages would be desirable.

534. Are they not known practically by the weavers themselves?—So far as I know, they are; but I have known instances where the circumstance of the master having given low wages, and where the men have agreed to take low wages, has been kept a secret for some time.

535. When there is a want of work, do you think it would be better, both for the manufacturer and the operative, to curtail the work, or to reduce the wages?—Circumstances may arise when either of those cases might be necessary.

536. Which should you recommend for the benefit of both parties, that the work should be curtailed or the wages be reduced?—That the work should be curtailed.

537. Do not you think that if any legislative enactment were to take place, fixing the rate of wages to be paid, that it would operate in this sort of way, that when there was slack time, that it would compel the master manufacturer in many instances to cease altogether giving out work to the weavers, rather than submit to a rate of wages for which he could get no adequate return?—If the manufacturer were so situated, that he had a considerable quantity (which frequently takes place) of warps on the loom, he would then have no alternative but to weave it out at the highest rate of wages under all circumstances.

538. Supposing those warps to be brought in, would not the tendency of a legislative enactment on this subject compel the master, in many more instances than they now feel themselves compelled, by the pressure of circumstances, to decline giving out their work altogether?—If the manufacturer was placed in such circumstances that he must give a certain rate of wages, or not at all, he must, as an alternative, give over manufacturing.

539. Then there would be many instances in which the operatives would be entirely without work, because they would not be enabled, by this legislative enactment,

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ment, to take out work under the legislative list price?—My conviction is, that to fix a rate of wages for any given time would produce a greater degree of distress upon the workmen than otherwise.

540. What time what would you fix for the wages?—I am decidedly opposed to the time being fixed.

541. You say it would produce greater distress among the workmen; explain your reason?—The manufacturer would immediately say, "If I am compelled to give so much wages, I must give over making it altogether; you must go about your business;" he would then get no work.

542. Would it not be better that he should cease working for a time, in order that the market might be relieved of the glut if he afterwards obtained a high rate of wages?—If he and his family could live for a time without working, it would be desirable.

543. Have you ever known a state of things when all the manufacturers ceased to give out work to any weavers, or can you imagine such a thing possible?—No.

544. Suppose there was a fixed rate of wages, you would not throw the workmen altogether out of work, and deprive the master employing them; but only a less number of persons would be employed, and the master would give a less quantity of work out?—The manufacturer must act according to the circumstances in which he is placed; if he can only give a certain rate of wages, he must either have them made at that price, or he must cease to make them altogether.

545. According to the plan suggested, the wages are fixed for a certain period?—Yes.

546. After that period there will be another rate of wages, according to the highest rate of wages paid by those masters producing half the goods. If the steam-loom was to come into competition with the hand-loom after that time, would not that higher rate of wages, paid by those higher-paying manufacturers, be reduced?—I am fully aware that at the end of three months there might be a fall; but to compel a manufacturer, under all circumstances, to pay the same rate of wages under all the difficulties in which he would be placed, would to me appear to be extremely hard.

547. Would not the rate of wages be naturally lowered, if any such circumstance as the steam-loom coming suddenly into operation with the hand-loom weaving, would not that, at the end of one, two or three months (whatever the period be), would not that have the effect of reducing the rate of wages paid by the higher-paying masters; and if they reduced their wages, that would re-act on the wages paid by all the manufacturers in the district, and would afford a groundwork as to the regulation of wages for the next three months?—Yes, I suppose it would.

548. Do you not think that the reduction of the rate of wages tends to increase the labour of the workman?—It does, frequently.

549. Then, in that case, the more you reduce wages, the more you increase the production of commodity, and the more you reduce the prices of the commodity?—It is on that account that I should prefer, and on that principle we have generally acted, in giving the people less work.

550. The reduction of wages tends to make the depression of prices still greater?—Why, it becomes a matter of absolute necessity, that if the weaver has been accustomed to do a certain quantity of work for so much money, and his wages are reduced, that he must try to get as much money by doing so much more work.

551. Therefore it follows, depression of trade increases the produce of the commodity, and therefore you think the increase of produce is no proof of the prosperity of any particular trade?—No.

552. Suppose Parliament was to pass a law to double the low rate of those wages, in what respect would the weaver be benefited?—The master would then turn all his workpeople off.

553. Suppose the masters themselves agreed upon the rate for weaving which the majority, those making more than one half the quantity of goods, thought they could afford to pay, what objection could be taken to their having the control of regulating the wages in their hands?—I suppose the weavers would object to it.

554. Suppose wages were doubled to-morrow, do you not think that that would tend to reduce the production?—Yes.

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555. Do you think that the raising of the wages of labour would diminish the production of commodities, and enable those commodities to rise in price?—If the weaver got the work at all, it would.

556. Does not the rate of wages that the master can give to the men depend on the price that he can get in the market for the manufactured article?—Undoubtedly.

557. And does not the price which he can get for that manufactured article depend materially upon the quantity of that manufactured article brought into the market?—The supply and the demand regulate both the wages and the price of goods.

558. And do you not think the supply is mainly increased by the reduction of wages and labour?—That is completely a relative position, it depends on the demand. The demand may fall off all at once, and then a glut may be created almost in an instant.

559. Is not the supply mainly affected by the state of the labour?—It is.

560. If such returns as have been suggested were repeated quarterly or half-yearly, and the averages taken as before stated, would the practice cause a slow but certain rise of wages?—I do not think it would.

561. Would such a process cause a competition to pay liberal wages, and stay the competition now so much complained of to reduce wages?—I think a quarterly publication of the rate of wages would be advantageous in this respect, that it would expose the payers of low wages.

562. As the rate of wages caused by this process would be determined by the manufacturers themselves, could any manufacturer, with any degree of fairness, complain of its operation?—Notwithstanding all we can say, one manufacturer may be placed in a much superior situation for giving a better rate of wages than others.

563. This rate of wages is not to be determined by any single manufacturer, but by the manufacturers producing half the quantity of goods; under those circumstances previously alluded to, as the rate of wages caused by this process would be determined by the manufacturers themselves, could any manufacturer, with any degree of fairness, complain of its operation?—Perhaps he might not; I do not see any just reason to complain, so far as I can view the question at present; at the same time it would always amount to this, whether other people gave the rate of wages; "I cannot," he would say, "therefore I must give up the employment."

564. Did you not state previously, that although certain rates of wages had been fixed, yet it was discovered that workmen had been engaged by manufacturers to work at lower terms?—I believe cases have existed in our neighbourhood where the masters have agreed to give lower wages, and where the men have agreed to take lower wages, and the circumstance has been for some time unknown.

565. Suppose a law were passed, giving power to the manufacturers, as a body, to agree upon a rate of wages for the manufacture of the several articles made in your district, do you not think it would operate advantageously both for the manufacturer and the weaver, inasmuch as no change could take place without the concurrence of the majority of the body?—It would be advantageous to the general trade, I have no doubt.

566. To both master and man?—That it might operate very injuriously in peculiar circumstances, I am decidedly of opinion.

567. Suppose the principle to be laid down that there is to be an equality of wages, are there not masters in certain situations who could not give the same wages as masters in other situations; for instance, there is one person at a distance from fuel, another at a distance from the market; can that man at a distance from fuel give as much wages, if he uses fuel in his manufacture, as the man that is near to it; and can that man who is 20 miles from the market where he sells his goods, give as much for the manufacture of those goods as the man who is immediate to the market, and at no expense in taking his goods there, or receive the raw commodity from perhaps an equal distance?—No; I stated at the commencement that the manufacturer living at a distance from the market pays less wages both to the fancy trade and the cloth trade.

568. When the manufacturer has the advantage of being near fuel and near to the market, do you think that all the advantage which he receives is given to the

the workman in the shape of additional wages, or given to himself in the shape of additional profits?—I cannot answer that.

569. Do you think, if the manufacturer has advantages such as have been suggested, of being nearer to the market or nearer to fuel, or having greater facility of production, do you think the advantage to the manufacturer is given to the workman in the shape of additional wages, or given to himself in the shape of additional profits?—It is very difficult to answer that question.

570. Perhaps that question may be answered by another, and that is this, do the manufacturers who live in these advantageous situations generally get rich rapidly, as they would do if they got additional profits; do they generally get rich rapidly, while the men who live at a distance are either not advancing in the world or are retrograding; does not the thing equalize itself in the respective situations in which the manufactories are situated?—I have no doubt.

571. Do you employ men in the country as well as in town?—Our work is all domestic manufacture.

572. Do you employ labourers at a distance, and also those which are close to them?—Yes.

573. What is the difference of wages you give?—We make no difference.

574. Have you read the hand-loom evidence of last Session?—I have read the extract from the evidence of last Session.

575. Did you see the sort of Bill proposed by Mr. Fielden?—Yes.

576. If an Act were framed, such as was suggested in evidence by Mr. Fielden, could its operation be easily evaded, and if so, how?—A manufacturer may give in false returns.

577. Would not the same objection rest against the recommendation you yourself gave of returns being made?—Yes.

578. That does not operate against the whole of the plan, but only against a part?—But I apprehend that no person would give in to a general inspection a less rate of wages than he was paying.

579. Suppose a manufacturer was inclined to give in a higher rate of wages than he was actually paying, would he not be liable to be checked by his own workmen?—Yes, I should think he would.

580. Would not that remove the objection you have made?—So far as publishing the rate of wages was concerned.

581. Do you think the plan could be evaded in any other way than the one you have suggested?—No, I should think the rate of wages given in by the manufacturer, and published and checked by the weaver, if uncontradicted, it would be a pretty near criterion.

582. Without giving any opinion as to the plan being advisable on general principles, do you think it is practicable to put it into operation?—I think the quarterly publication of the rate of wages is practicable.

583. Do you see any other part of the plan that is impracticable?—No.

584. Would the powers there given for settling disputes by arbitration be sufficient?—I think it would be preferable; an application to the magistrates, for the most of the cases that come before the magistrates are referred in that way.

585. Are you aware there is an Act of Parliament in force that authorizes a workman, dissatisfied with the wages he receives, to appeal to a magistrate, and that the magistrate has the power to appoint an arbitrator?—I was not distinctly aware of that, but from a fact that has lately occurred. A case occurred before the magistrates not many days ago, and it was referred to arbitration, and decided by arbitration. I was not aware it was the general law.

586. Can you suggest any improvement in that last law for settling disputes between masters and workmen?—No, I think the principle of arbitration the best.

587. Now you, in your evidence, have spoken of unprincipled manufacturers; will you explain to the Committee what you mean by unprincipled manufacturers; who are they?—By unprincipled manufacturers, generally, I mean that where a man continues to give for a considerable period of time less wages than other manufacturers have given, that that is unprincipled.

588. Have you known manufacturers in your own neighbourhood who have resorted to that practice which you think is unprincipled?—Occasionally.

589. Have you any such manufacturers residing among you now?—I am not aware, with the exception I have mentioned of persons living at a distance, who

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are giving lower wages. The observation which an honourable Member alluded to, had reference to manufacturers living at a distance, not to the weaver living at a distance.

590. Taking your own showing of this question, that there are manufacturers who endeavour to keep down the wages while others are wishing to support them, would there be anything unfair in throwing the controlling power of regulating the wages into the hands of those who wish to maintain as high wages as they can?—I think it would be extremely hard in some circumstances.

591. Why?—For this reason; some manufacturers possess a power to dispose of their goods and manage their concerns very superior to others.

592. Then would the employment of the weavers be lessened by the operation of such a plan as has been proposed?—I think it would, and I think it would operate injuriously, for this reason: a manufacturer, under the peculiar situation in which he is placed, would say, "I am compelled to give a certain rate of wages; I cannot afford to do it, therefore you must go without work."

593. When you speak of compulsion, do not you mistake the intention of the plan proposed. The plan proposed simply suggests that those who pay highest wages should be protected from those unprincipled manufacturers of which you speak; not that they should be compelled to pay higher wages than they themselves fix, but that they should be protected in the payment of such wages as they establish voluntarily of themselves?—I think that a periodical publication of wages would correct almost every evil, because if there is any mischief arising from giving low wages, it is by secrecy; whenever it gets known, it will be remedied by the weavers themselves.

594. Of what avail would the publication of any list be unless it was enforced?—The only avail it would be is, it would expose those who were giving low wages.

595. In what way?—It would expose their giving low wages.

596. Who is to tell the tale?—The public might.

597. Of what use would be the publication of the list unless it was enforced?—It would expose those who were giving low wages.

598. And would that exposure prevent them from persevering in that practice in these times, when work is somewhat scarce?—I think it would prevent them to a certain extent.

599. Just explain the operation.—I think the knowledge which other weavers got of the fact, and the knowledge which those weavers had that they were receiving lower wages than others, would induce them to require the master to give the same wages as the others.

600. Have they any means of prevailing on the masters to give it unless they be so disposed?—No, they have not; but they would say, "We will not weave any more at the price, and we will bring our work in."

601. Will the weaver say that when he cannot obtain employment from any other manufacturer?—If the other manufacturers are paying a better rate of wages and can sell their goods, I should think they would employ them.

602. That is, that they would be willing to increase the number of weavers, and give out more work?—Yes.

603. But I think you have stated you have known periods when work was very scarce and very difficult to obtain; have you at those periods witnessed reduction of wages by a very few, in opposition to the wages of a many of the manufacturers?—Yes, I believe such cases have existed.

604. Then would there be anything unfair, at a period like that, that the controlling power of regulating wages should have rested with the majority, so as to prevent those parties from taking the steps they do?—Well, it appears to me doubtful; a power lodged in the hands of a few in that sort of way, the use or abuse of it appears to me to be doubtful.

605. You stated it to be your opinion, that on those occasions when the demand for goods is slack and work difficult to obtain by the weavers, you have stated it is your opinion it is better to curtail the quantity of work than to reduce the wages?—Yes.

606. Then would not such a regulation as the one proposed, if it had been in force at that period, have at once led to some reduction of work and to the maintenance of the wages that were then paid?—Such is the variety of the patterns of the fancy trade, that the one man may be making an article of general

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demand and another may be making an article going out of fashion, and he may be compelled to take a less price though it is a similar article.

607. There are many competitors of every description of fancy-work with which you are acquainted?—Yes.

608. And are not some of them sometimes disposed to make stocks of goods?—Yes; to whom very serious losses occasionally happen.

609. Sometimes those who make stocks would be disposed to hold up the wages, provided the example of reducing the wages was not set by any other persons?—Yes.

610. And is not that practice injurious to the masters who wish to maintain wages, and also to the weavers who have to suffer from the reduction of wages?—The practice of what?

611. Of reducing wages, and reducing the value of the stock at the same time?—I stated before, there were two modes of proceeding in distressing times; the one might reduce his wages and keep his weavers tolerably employed; the other might continue to pay the same wages, and send his weavers frequently without work.

612. One manufacturer resorts to curtailment of work, and another resorts to reduction of wages?—Yes; and under these circumstances a man who has received reduced wages may get more per week than the man who is weaving at the full wages, and having his work standing.

613. But what operation has that, both upon the manufacturer and the weaver, taking into account that you have already given to us your opinion that it would be better to curtail the work than to reduce the wages?—There are such a variety of circumstances occurring in the fancy trade, that no man could tell whether the man who made the less quantity of work, and kept up his wages, or the man who had worked a quantity of work at a lower rate of wages would suffer most by stock.

614. Has it not, within your experience, come to your knowledge that it is much easier to reduce wages than to effect a rise in them?—Circumstances would make it as easy for the one as the other; that is, when there is an increased demand or a diminished one.

615. Has the downward progress of wages in your experience been very considerable?—No.

616. How long have you been a manufacturer?—I have been connected with the fancy waistcoat trade since the year 1800, 35 years.

617. I think you stated to the Committee that you had a list of the prices that you have paid for weaving, but that it was not in such a complete state that you could submit it to the Committee; but that you could do that?—Yes.

618. Can you, in that Return, give us the prices you have paid for manufacturing the same article for the 35 years you have been a manufacturer?—No, I have not been a manufacturer during that period; that was the period I became apprenticed.

619. How long have you been a manufacturer?—About 18 years.

620. Can you give us the prices you have paid for any one given article during that 18 years?—I can give you the price I have paid at present; the list I have is only a list of the average prices paid at present; a comparison could scarcely be drawn, because we always paid by the yard, and now we pay by the dozen.

621. How long is it since you began to pay by the dozen?—Two or three years ago.

622. Not more than that?—No.

623. Can you give us the prices you have paid since you began to pay by the dozen?—We have given the same price.

624. You give the same price now that you gave two or three years ago?—Yes.

625. Can you give us any comparison of the prices when the payment was made by the yard with the prices now paid by the dozen?—No.

626. Why not?—Because the fabric construction of the article is made on a different principle altogether; for instance, during the early period in the fancy manufacture, the whole of it consisted in the stripes in the weft; afterwards a period existed when it consisted almost wholly of stripes in the warp; at the present time the manufacture consists principally in figure articles, wove by machines.

627. Are the fabrics the same width they were formerly?—About the same, 27 inches.

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628. Have the number of shoots that the weaver has put in been varied much?—It varies considerably.

629. Does it vary more now than it did formerly?—Yes.

630. In what way; does he put in more shoots, or fewer?—That is what gave rise to the principle of paying by the hank; there is as low as three hanks to 16, or more than that.

631. Can you tell us for any given number of years what the weaver has been receiving per hank for weaving the different fabrics intrusted to him to weave up?—When he was weaving stripes he had the wages paid according to the extra trouble in making them.

632. Then you have no standard of regulating them, by which a comparison could be made with the wages now paid and formerly?—It would be difficult.

633. But is it insurmountable; is that knowledge to be obtained from other weavers or manufacturers in your neighbourhood?—It could not be readily obtained.

634. Is it possible?—I think not.

635. When you speak of fancy manufactured articles, does that include merinos and cassinets?—They are what we consider plain articles.

636. They do not come under the denomination of fancy articles?—No.

637. Do you manufacture either merinos or cassinets?—Not as articles wove for trowsers generally; we make some.

638. Are merinos and cassinets wove by the yard or by the hank?—I really do not know; I know what we weave is calculated on the principle of hanks at the rate I have told you, that is 1 *s.* per dozen.

639. That is your present price?—Yes.

640. What have you known paid per dozen at any period since you became a manufacturer, for cassinets?—The payment per dozen has not existed more than two or three years.

641. And never varied?—No.

642. I think you stated that your fancy waistcoat weavers could earn about 14 *s.* a week?—I said from 13 *s.* to 20 *s.*

643. Do the cassinet and merino weavers get always as high as that?—I should think not.

644. Can you tell the Committee what are the earnings of those men engaged in weaving cassinets and merinos?—No.

645. Do not you live in the district where a great variety of those things are manufactured?—Yes.

646. There are a great many manufacturers with whom you have frequent intercourse and communication?—The manufacturers in our neighbourhood have very little intercourse with each other.

647. Do you never hear of complaints of the weavers engaged in weaving merinos?—Yes.

648. And cassinets?—Yes, frequently.

649. Do you think the complaints they urge are true, or are they false?—Though I do not know the rate of wages, I think, from the state and condition of the weavers generally, I think the wages low.

650. Now is there a greater or less proportion of the weavers of Huddersfield and that neighbourhood employed in weaving cassinets and merinos, than is engaged in weaving fancy waistcoating?—I do not know.

651. Have you no means of forming any opinion?—No criterion.

652. Though you live in the midst of it?—I have not.

653. What is the principal manufacture at Holmfirth?—Woollen cloths.

654. What distance is that from Huddersfield?—Seven miles.

655. Have there been serious disputes, and perhaps turn-outs?—I am not aware of any serious disputes between the weavers at Holmfirth and their masters. There was an union and considerable disputes two or three years ago.

656. How long is it since?—About two years.

657. Do you know how those disputes ended?—I think they ended in the masters giving the same rate of wages as formerly. It was connected with the same principle that I have now spoken of, that living in this district they were a greater distance from market, and living in the country places where they could get milk and bread lower, they could therefore afford to make the goods lower in their neighbourhood than in the immediate neighbourhood of Huddersfield.

658. Did those disputes lead to frequent meetings between the master and the weaver;

weaver; were there not deputations from each?—There were frequent meetings among the workmen; I am not aware whether there were any meetings between the master and workmen.

659. Could such meetings have taken place without your knowing of them?—Yes.

660. You think it is possible?—Yes.

661. Were not those disputes between masters and men notorious; did they not afford a topic of every day's conversation?—Yes, there was a great deal of talk about it at the time.

662. You heard some of the conversation that was carried on relative to those disputes?—I have had general conversation in reference to there being disputes, and their unions existed to a very considerable extent, and a general stand was made for a time in favour of higher wages.

663. But the weavers did not succeed, I think you said, in obtaining higher wages?—I cannot be sure; not to the whole extent. I draw that conclusion from the fact, that it was stated at a meeting at Manchester last Tuesday week, that they were still giving in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield a lower rate of wages than they were in the immediate neighbourhood of Manchester.

664. Have you reason to believe the weavers were then suffering great privations from the low wages paid for their work at the period of those unions and disputes?—At this period of time I really could not charge my recollection with all the circumstances which occurred, but as far as I recollect, I think there was some complaint about making the pieces so much larger.

665. Longer?—Yes.

666. That was, giving out more work for the same money?—I think that was so.

667. That would amount to a reduction of wages?—Yes.

668. Have you reason to believe the weavers at that period were suffering from great distress, owing to inadequate wages?—We are nine miles distant from Holmfirth; I really could not give you an opinion as to the real state of the workmen, as to whether they were well paid or ill paid at that period.

669. In a former question put to you, you stated that during the last 15 years there have been many changes?—Of course.

670. How is it you can recollect the changes that have taken place during the last 15 years, and be so ignorant as to what has taken place within the last two or three years?—Did I state I was ignorant?

671. If the Committee have not misunderstood you, you have stated that you cannot recollect how those disputes were settled which were so notorious only three years ago?—Because they were not connected with my own business, and we live at a distance of nine miles from Holmfirth.

672. Then in the evidence you have been giving as to wages, the Committee are to limit it exclusively to your knowledge of the business in which you yourself are engaged, as to the manufacturing of fancy articles?—Yes.

673. With respect to merinos or cassinets, or woollen cloths, you yourself possess no knowledge?—Very little indeed; scarcely any. I have to state that from a conversation which took place at a meeting that I attended, of the cloth manufacturers and those who are making various descriptions of fancy pantaloons, they state, most decidedly, that there would be very considerable difficulty in giving in a quarterly list of prices, even from the names of the article manufactured.

674. You have before stated all those articles, described under some name by which they are distinguished and known, both by the manufacturer and weaver?—Yes.

675. Do you apprehend the difficulty to be so great in returning the list of prices for those different fabrics as you have represented?—I have stated without reserve, and I state the conviction of some other manufacturers at the meeting, that there would be very few difficulties with reference to fancy articles, in stating the prices, for I think there are but three descriptions of prices that we are giving; but among those persons who make fancy articles for trowsers, some pay by the hank and some pay by the yard.

676. But they are all known and distinguished by some name?—I think they are.

677. Can you tell the Committee the proportion of weavers employed in the manufacture

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manufacture of fancy waistcoating to the number of weavers employed in weaving woollen cloths, merinos and cassinets?—No.

678. Are there a much greater proportion employed in the three latter manufactories than there are in the manufacture of fancy waistcoating?—I cannot say.

679. What do you suppose to be the number of manufacturers engaged in the manufacture of fancy waistcoating?—I cannot say.

680. It is a great article of exportation?—Yes; considerably less than they were.

681. You have stated that you think the publication of a rate of wages would be both practicable and useful?—So far as detecting those persons who pay low wages.

682. Your idea is, that the publication of the rate of wages would shame the low payers into being better payers?—Yes.

683. Would not the effect be, that if the only evidence which could be given, namely, the evidence of the weaver, would be the effect of turning him off, do you think that evidence would be given?—The evidence, I conceive, would be collected, not from the weaver but from the manufacturer himself; that is, he would be compelled to give in, to the inspection of the churchwarden or whoever you appoint, the list of wages that he was giving at that time.

684. But you before stated that the master might give in a false statement, that he was paying a higher rate than he actually was paying?—He would be liable to be confronted.

685. If his own weaver was to inform against him, would not the effect be that the weaver probably would be turned off?—It might be so.

686. But if there was a minimum of wages protected by law, would not the security to the weaver who informed of any fraud be, that his low wages-paying master could not, turning him off, resort to another weaver who, driven by distress, would accept lower wages?—If the weaver was turned off for giving information, of course he would have to set such workpeople on as would work for him, if he wanted his work done at such a rate.

687. If that minimum of wages was protected by law, the master would not have the same advantage?—If the minimum of wages was protected by law, the manufacturer then would have no alternative but either to employ at those wages or turn him adrift.

688. The difference between having a publication of the rate of wages, and the wages protected, would be this, that in the one case a fraud might be introduced by the master, and in the other case a fraud would not be introduced by the master?—I think, as a whole, legislative interference between master and workman would be very doubtful in its bearings.

689. You have expressed your apprehension of the introduction of power-looms in competition with the hand-loom?—Yes; and my conviction is, that power-looms have done more to reduce the price of hand-loom weaving than anything else.

690. Are you aware that at Yorkshire very considerable exertions have been made to obtain a short time for working in factories, a ten-hour day Bill?—Yes, and there are some exertions now making.

691. Now do you think, if the time of labour in mills were restricted to ten-hour days, that that would be an advantage to hand-loom manufactories?—For a time, until more factories were built, I suppose it would.

692. Then the weavers would be better employed, and at better wages, you think, provided the hours of labour were restricted in factories?—I cannot say, as a whole, whether they would or not.

693. If it would not be so, why do you apprehend the competition of power-looms?—The increase of production.

694. And having to meet competition in the market, the prices of the hand-loom manufacturer were lower?—Yes.

695. Then if a less quantity was thrown into the market by the power-loom, would not that be advantageous to the hand-loom manufacturer?—The way in which I conceive power-looms injurious is this, that the hand-loom manufacturer is compelled to divide the profits and amount of weaving, so as to bring the article manufactured to the same price as the article wove by the power-loom.

696. Would not the limit of the production by the power-loom just have the opposite effect?—Yes.

697. Would not reducing the time of labour from 12 to 10 hours necessarily lead to that reduction?—I dare say it would.

698. Is

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698. Is there any scarcity of workmen now in your neighbourhood?—I am not aware that there are many complaints; there are always a few people out of work in almost any circumstances.

699. The complaint, then, is not of scarcity or deficiency of work, but of inadequate wages, on the part of the weavers?—I do not know that there is any complaint of inadequate wages.

700. Do not the weavers complain?—No; they have got nearly all the wages they ask for; I believe they have the same price of wages now as before. I am speaking now with reference to fancy weavers.

701. Is there scarcity of work in any other branch of hand-loom weaving?—I am not aware that many are out of work.

702. What prices do you now pay for the description of cloth which you manufacture?—For plain articles we give 1*s.* a dozen, and figured articles we give for some dozens 19*d.*, and others 20*d.* per dozen.

Jovis, 2° die Aprilis, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. *Joseph C. Milner*, called in; and further Examined.

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703. YOU have a table to put in of wages?—I have an account of the actual earnings of a number of our workmen that come within the immediate range of our own observation.

704. Will you be so good as to put that statement in?—The statement I made in reference to our wages generally, was my conviction that they earn from 13*s.* to 20*s.* per week; I find, however, from actual observation in the statement I had in my rough draft, that the rate of wages runs below that amount; but when I take into consideration that the three months of the average, the period I have taken, is the slackest three months of the year, I apprehend what I have stated in reference to the average amount of our wages throughout the year would be pretty near what I have previously stated. The first class is No. 1, 15*s.* 6*d.*; No. 2, 10*s.* 9*d.*; No. 3, 10*s.* 3*d.*; No. 4, 14*s.* 6*d.*; No. 5, 17*s.* 6*d.*; that is the first class.

705. Could you add to that the proportionate number of workmen getting those wages?—No; and I can assure you this account was written out very hastily: I only received the letter to come here at 10 o'clock on Saturday night, and I set off from home at 8 o'clock on Monday morning, therefore I was to do it between six and eight on Monday morning.

706. Are those individual weavers, or weavers and their families?—No, individual weavers; during a period of about three months, I have taken the exact time, and divided it by six days.

707. You have taken the average of the time?—I have taken the exact time, and divided it by the average of the six days.

708. What description of weavers are they?—Men with families, and some of their families are also weaving. This is the result of one person's earning.

709. Do you keep a distinct account of the earnings of each individual in a family?—Yes, and I pay them every time they bring their cuttings.

710. Have you an account of the other branches of the family, what they earn in the same period?—I have an account of the plain weaving, which is principally weaving by the younger branches of the family.

711. Do the children of those families you mentioned earn anything in addition?—Yes; I mean to say that is not universal, because a man may have no family.

712. Do the children of those weavers obtain wages as well as the weavers themselves?—The winding for their particular looms is included.

713. How much of the family does that occupy?—One child will wind for two of the weavers.

714. What wages do the children make?—I really do not know.

715. Nor the workmen?—I do not know. I have got a list of the plain weaving, which is done by the younger branches of the family.

716. That comes in a subsequent part of your statement?—Yes.

717. I think you stated you employed 200?—From 200 to 300.

718. And here you have given a selection, out of 200, of six individuals?—I have only taken five.

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719. I think you named six?—I named six yesterday; I see there is but five of them.

720. Are those five individuals a fair specimen of the wages earned by the majority of your weavers?—I should think it is hardly a fair specimen; it was taken out at random; I should think it is under rather than over; it is lower than I really expected. I stated in my general evidence the other day, that I thought the wages ran from 13*s.* to 20*s.*; that is still my conviction, because those three months are the slackest months in the year.

721. What three months do you allude to?—December, January and February.

722. Why was that deficiency of work?—The season ends for dark goods at the end of November; the delivery of goods for the winter trade almost ceases by the end of November.

723. Were those weavers limited to the quantity of work given out during the three months which you have spoken of?—Yes.

724. Had you had a sufficiency of work, could they have earned still more?—Yes.

725. What is the description of cloth that those weavers work up? what name does it go by?—Figured valencias, dark and coloured.

726. Is it laborious work to weave those?—The work of the engines is rather heavy.

727. Can the weavers in general weave that description of cloth?—Very young persons would not.

728. Then it is laborious work those men have to perform?—Yes, it is considered rather heavy, two descriptions of work which I have given in.

729. How many hours a day would they have to work to earn those wages?—I could not give you a criterion, because they take the work out, and just work as they like; I have frequently observed some playing during the day, and then they are working till 12 at night; others, who are more steady in their habits, work 12 hours a day.

730. The sums that you have given in are the wages that you actually pay yourself to the weaver?—That we have actually paid during the time I have spoken of.

731. To one individual weaver?—Yes.

732. Whose earnings you have selected for the three months preceding the time you came up?—I have taken from the time they brought the cut in, and calculated it by the number of six days per week.

733. Have you the number of cuts brought in in that period?—Yes, I have the particulars, but I have not taken them down.

734. Can you state the number of cuts?—They vary exceedingly, both in length and cut; they vary from 12 to 30 yards.

735. Are the weavers of those waistcoats paid by the yard?—By the hank, as I stated the other day.

736. A penny the hank?—Nineteen-pence for the first description, and for the second description 1*s.* 8*d.* per dozen.

737. Have the weavers of those figured goods considerable expense to incur in fitting themselves up with looms, and all the implements with which they have to work?—The loom and the lathes are their own.

738. Then they have to purchase that?—Yes.

739. Then the implements and the gear?—The gearing and the engine is our property.

740. What is the engine; can you describe it to the Committee?—Why, they are called witches; that is the technical appellation of them.

741. Is that an engine for winding yarn?—No, for working the figure.

742. Then there is an engine attached to this loom?—Yes, to those two descriptions of looms.

743. Does the weaver work both the loom and the engine?—Yes.

744. How is the engine worked; by the foot or by the hand?—It is wrought by a treadle.

745. Without any assistance from a draw-boy?—Yes.

746. Can you state the value of the loom?—I should think the value of a good loom and lathe is worth from 2*l.* to 2*l.* 10*s.*

747. Then the gear?—They are our property.

748. You entrust them to the weaver while he remains in your employ?—Yes.

749. Have

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749. Have they to make frequent changes in these figured articles?—Yes.

750. Does that subject them to a loss of time, and to any considerable expense?—The change of drawing in or changing the engine is paid for by the master; the change of the pattern is included in the time.

751. Does that subject the weaver to any considerable inconvenience, or to any expense, when he makes those changes; any loss of time?—The change of the pattern is included in the time; the change of the gearing is paid for.

752. Is the workman's time paid for when he makes those changes?—I think the payment is hardly adequate to the amount he earns during the time he is weaving.

753. In the three months you spoke of, had those weavers of whom you have spoken to make those changes?—I think some of them had.

754. And they have been paid for those changes, which are not included; I find one of the weavers you have given in will earn 17*s.* 6*d.*, No. 2, 10*s.* 9*d.*, the other 10*s.* 3*d.*; can you state the reason why there was this disparity between the two weavers?—No, I cannot; either some of them are better workmen, or some of them worked more time; I can state no other difference.

755. You know who the workmen were?—Yes.

756. Have they been in your employ for some time?—Yes, they have.

757. Do you know them to be industrious and sober and diligent workmen, or otherwise?—We cannot take much account of their industry.

758. Have you any reason to suspect it?—Nothing but the result of their earning.

759. Have you reason to apprehend those who have got 10*s.* 3*d.* were not industrious?—I have some reason to apprehend they have not been so industrious as the others.

760. Were not so industrious as those who earn 17*s.* 6*d.*; but do you think they worked a fair day's work during that period?—I hardly think they did, though I think it right to state that there are a variety of circumstances connected with the work that may render one person's work less efficient than another's, in consequence of having to wait; and various changes will occur in the situation of one weaver that do not occur in another; one accidental circumstance places some weavers in a more favourable situation than others.

761. Is the quality of the work the same in all cases?—The quality of the work is, I may say, exactly the same, except any defect that may turn out either in the warp or the weft, which we cannot always obviate.

762. Now, do you think that the five weavers that you have selected, and whose earnings you have given in to the Committee, furnish any fair criterion at all by which the Committee or you can judge of the state of the weaving body at Huddersfield?—Well, I think it is a pretty fair criterion of the work in that class.

763. That is, working valencias?—Yes.

764. Can you give us any estimate at all, or any approximation to what you believe to be the truth, as to the number employed in weaving of valencias?—No, I have no means of ascertaining the number.

765. Are the 200 weavers you employ employed in weaving valencias generally, or only a small proportion?—Generally.

766. What are the other weavers employed in that do not weave valencias?—Woollen goods, in the same looms; woollen yarn.

767. With respect to this question generally, though you have taken in, in order to estimate the rate of wages, each individual representing a class, do you consider that that represents a fair average of the rate of wages paid?—Hardly, for the reasons I have stated.

768. I understand you the average of wages that you have given in is somewhat lower than what you had considered to be the ordinary gains?—Yes.

769. You examined your book and took at random certain names from the books, for the three months last past?—Yes.

770. Now you have the statements of the earnings of those other weavers of plain goods; will you just state what that is, and the number of weavers you have selected?—No. 6, 13*s.*; No. 7, 10*s.*; No. 8, 11*s.*; No. 9, 10*s.* 6*d.*; No. 10, 14*s.* 6*d.* Those are at 1*s.* 10*d.* per dozen.

771. In both those cases the last number is the highest; is that from an accidental circumstance?—Yes, it is.

772. Those are the valencias which you have hitherto stated?—Yes.

773. You have been a manufacturer of this cloth for a great many years?—Yes, from the time I stated.

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774. Are there great manufacturers that reside in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield besides you, with whom you have to compete?—Yes.

775. Are there many that employ as many hands as you?—Yes.

776. Are the earnings of the other weavers employed in other manufactories similar to what you have given?—I am not aware that any person is paying a higher rate of wages; certainly circumstances may arise between one manufacturer and another where he may be keeping them rather better employed.

777. You are not aware of any paying higher wages than you pay yourself?—No.

778. Are you aware of any paying lower wages?—I think there are a few instances at a distance, as I stated before.

779. Then is this work so abundant that the weavers can change their employer?—Every time they finish their work they may change their employer if they choose.

780. And there is a difference in the wages paid?—For this reason we pay them in pounds, shillings and pence every piece they bring in; if they choose to leave their work, they can receive their wages, without telling whether they are going to work forward or not.

781. You say there are those who pay lower wages than you?—Not in the immediate neighbourhood.

782. What is the distance that those weavers live from you that receive lower wages?—Seven or eight miles.

783. Do they live in the direction of Halifax or Bradford?—No.

784. Are you aware that those weavers who live at seven or eight miles distance know that you pay better wages than the wages they receive?—I should think they do.

785. Then would you not naturally conclude that they would come and ask work from you, in order to get the better wages which you are paying?—No.

786. Why not?—Because they would have so many miles to come for their work and to take it back every time.

787. The going backwards and forwards to the work would make such a reduction in their earnings that they had better remain at home weaving at a lower price?—It would, of course, make some reduction.

788. So much as to induce them to continue the work at a lower price?—Yes. I have some weavers who are living at that distance; we, however, pay them the same as the other weavers, but the expense of coming backwards and forwards amounts to something.

789. Can you tell the Committee the difference between those who pay lower wages than you and the wages you pay yourself?—I think the difference is not more than 1 *d.* a dozen.

790. Have those weavers who have weaved these valencias any other expenses to incur than that of the cost of the loom?—They have the materials for dressing, and the price paid for dressing silk warp.

791. Is that an expense to them?—No; they have the material found, and they are paid for dressing silk warps.

792. But in the payment you name it includes that?—Yes.

793. Have they any expenses to incur besides the loom, and, as you have already stated, the expense of some person to wind for them?—Some of the cotton warps are dressed and some not, but the expense is very trifling for that.

794. Have they any other outgoings?—None, with the exception of winding, that I am aware of, and perhaps a little thread occasionally, though we find a good deal of the thread.

795. If they had any other expenses, you must be aware of them?—I am speaking as near the truth as I possibly can.

796. Are not the expenses of the weavers who live away from Huddersfield, at a distance of seven or eight miles, their rent, and the price of provisions, somewhat less than those who live in the town?—Both their rent and the price of provisions.

797. Do you think the difference in rent and the difference in provisions makes the low rate of wages they receive equivalent to the higher rate of wages you pay?—I think it would nearly make the difference.

798. Now go on to the third class?—Plain weaving at 1 *s.* per dozen; No. 11, 11 *s.* 9 *d.*; No. 12, 7 *s.* 7 *d.*; No. 13, 7 *s.* 6 *d.*; No. 14, 10 *s.* 3 *d.*; principally wove by young men and women.

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799. Is that the whole of your statement?—Yes.

800. That is all the weavers you have selected?—Yes.

801. How many weavers do you employ in that manufacture?—I cannot say at present; I have not any information.

802. Do you produce more or less of plain than figured?—Sometimes more, sometimes less; they vary exceedingly, according to circumstances and the demand; sometimes we stop the figured work and put plain into it.

803. Have those weavers to incur the expense of any assistance in any way?—I have no doubt they occasionally assist each other; I have no doubt they do. Then, you see, it is a sort of mutual agreement among themselves, and they repay each other.

804. Is it the practice in families for weavers sometimes to keep one loom going by a change of hands?—What, night and day?

805. For any length of time during the day; when one weaver has exhausted himself, does another weaver take his place and go on with the work?—I do not think such a case occurs; I am not aware of it.

806. Have you never known of more than one weaver working at the same loom?—If we were placed in extraordinary circumstances, that we wanted a piece in a given time, I have no doubt that some of our best weavers would lay themselves out in such a way.

807. If that necessity required it, and if they could obtain the work, is not that the common practice among them?—We should not allow it if we knew it.

808. Can they do it without your knowledge?—They hardly could, in consequence of the extra amount of work that they would bring in.

809. Then do you limit the work?—No, not generally; they are under no special limitation; the work is given out and brought in, and they frequently wait a little time, in slack times, until such time as another pattern can be given them.

810. How many slack times have you had in the course of the last seven years?—I cannot say.

811. Have you had many, or but few?—Why, the term is so ambiguous, it varies so exceedingly from one to another thing, that I really could not give any direct answer to the question.

812. It is your own term, "slack time;" what do you mean by it?—I mean, when we are without orders.

813. When you are without orders do the hands suffer from want of work?—In the way I have stated, and the manufacturer suffers too.

814. The way you have stated is, there is a limitation of the work?—And I have stated that these three last months past has been a slack time.

815. Call up your recollection, and tell us how many slack periods you have had since 1825?—I could not do that; my recollection could not carry me through that.

816. Can you state no periods of time, when it must be fresh in your memory as to this slackness?—No.

817. Had you a slack time last year?—We have always, more or less, a slack time in changing from one description to another.

818. Had you a slack time last year?—I state generally, that we have always more or less in changing from one description to another.

819. Had you any slack time last year?—The time I am speaking of commenced last year in December.

820. Had you no slack time before December?—No; they were pretty well employed before that period.

821. The whole of that year?—I cannot say as to the whole of the year, because in the generality of the trade there are two distinct changes during the year; that is, the light-coloured goods are wove for the spring, and dark-coloured goods are wove for the winter.

822. Do you make use of wool in your manufacture?—Yes.

823. Was the price of wool complained of in the manufacturing district last year, as being too high for the manufacturer to pursue that business?—The price of wool was complained of as high.

824. Did that lead to any reduction of work generally at Huddersfield?—I am not aware that it did.

825. Then if there were any statements made that work was scarce at Huddersfield, in consequence of the high price of wool, were those statements true or were they false?—Those statements might be perfectly true with regard to the manufacture

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facture of trowsers, and those descriptions of goods that are made principally of wool.

826. Then, though there was not a scarcity of work as regards valencias, and those plain fabrics that you make, yet there was a considerable scarcity of work at Huddersfield in other branches of the manufacture?—I am not aware of hearing any very serious complaints on that subject; such a thing might be the case; I cannot speak to the general state of the trade.

827. Is it possible for you to live in Huddersfield when a scarcity of work takes place, and complaints are urged on every side, without your knowing of it?—I am telling you the truth as near as I can; and that is all I have to state.

828. Then all your evidence is strictly confined to the manufacture of valencias and plain stuffs?—Yes.

829. You do not take in either the manufacture of cloth or the manufacture of fancy pantaloons, nor the manufacture of cassinets nor merinos?—No.

830. Can you give the Committee any opinion at all as to the number employed in these plain and figured valencias, as compared with the number employed in other descriptions of manufacture?—No, I could not.

831. Have you any reason to think that four-fifths of the weavers are employed in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield in weaving those articles which you do not manufacture?—If such a number as four-fifths are weaving other descriptions of goods, it is more than I am aware of.

832. Does the number engaged in other descriptions of manufacture exceed those engaged in valencias, plain and figured?—I dare say they do.

833. How much?—I really cannot tell.

834. I do not want it precisely.—I can form no conception; indeed, I really cannot; and that is the truth.

835. And you cannot give the Committee any opinion at all as to the earnings of those weavers engaged in the other description of manufacture?—I cannot.

836. Then the whole of your evidence is limited to the manufacture of valencias, plain and figured?—Yes.

837. And those are the earnings which you have obtained from your own books by selecting out 14 weavers out of the 200 you employ?—Yes.

838. And have you any reason to think that their selection would give a better average or a worse average than the whole of the weavers that you employ?—I have every reason to believe that the whole of our weavers, for 12 months, would give a considerably better average than that.

839. Have you on any former occasion taken out a statement from your books of the earnings of your weavers, in order to compare with your own opinion as to what the earnings were?—I think that at one period an account was sent to a Committee of this description of the quantities of what was done.

840. How long is that ago?—I cannot state to you; and whether we have such a statement or not in our possession now, I cannot say.

841. But if it be fresh in your memory that such communication was sent, would not your memory suffice to impress upon your mind the time, or somewhere near the time, when that communication was sent?—I cannot say.

842. Can you state within a year or two?—No.

843. Has it been within the last two years?—No, nor within the last seven, I think.

844. For what purpose was it sent?—I really cannot be sure of the fact; I know a number of questions were asked, and a number of answers given, but whether there was a statement of the wages I cannot state; I know a number of questions were asked as to the distress of manufactures, and a number of answers were given. I think the questions and answers remain in our books at the present day; but whether there are any questions as to the wages, I cannot say.

845. Was that in the year 1826?—I think it was; an inquiry asking certain questions respecting the state and condition of the manufactures in our neighbourhood, and I think we have the questions and answers in our books, a copy of which we sent to Parliament.

846. Did you ever hear of an attempt being made at Huddersfield to ascertain the circumstances of the weavers?—I am aware such an attempt was made a few years ago.

847. Were visits made from house to house, and from master to master, with a view to ascertain what their real condition was?—There were visits made from house to house, I dare say, and a number of cases given in.

848. Were

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848. Were any communications arising out of that survey made to Lord Harewood?—I really do not know; I dare say William Stock, of Huddersfield, could tell you.

849. What is your reason for thinking Mr. Stock can tell us?—Why, I believe he was the organ through which that communication was made.

850. Then there was such a communication?—I think there was; and the conviction of the neighbourhood was, that it was a very extreme case indeed.

851. Extreme, in what way?—It exhibited an extreme case of distress; it selected extreme cases.

852. Do you mean an exaggerated statement?—No; it might be true as far as it went; I will not say it was not, because I have no means of contradicting it.

853. When you say extreme, do you mean it was fair in the whole?—No; it exhibited a few extreme cases, and was by no means a general statement of the state of the country, bad as it was.

854. Did you not state the inquiry was from house to house?—I think it was principally in the neighbourhood of Almondbury.

855. Is the place you have just named part of Huddersfield?—No, it is not in the borough of Huddersfield; it is a town about two miles distant.

856. Did not any of those inquiries refer to Huddersfield?—I cannot say but there might have been a few cases in Huddersfield; but that Almondbury was distressed is perfectly true, and they were weaving those low descriptions of goods that were almost out of demand, and they were weaving for almost anything that they could get to keep themselves alive.

857. Are the weavers of Almondbury now in a state of distress or otherwise?—I am not aware that they are in distress at present.

858. Have their wages been advanced since that period?—I should think they had.

859. Do you not know that they have?—That is all the answer I can return.

860. You do not know whether they have or have not?—I should think they had.

861. Do you know anything about the prices paid?—No, I do not.

862. Do you know what description of goods they weave at Almondbury?—There are some of our weavers in Almondbury; some of the weavers I gave you live in Almondbury.

863. Do they weave cassinets in Almondbury?—Those descriptions who have been most distressed have woven cassinets.

864. Cassinet, I believe, is an article very little used?—There are a great many cassinets wove; I believe they are made up as low as from 20 *d.* to 2 *s.*

865. What is it?—A low article of pantaloons, exported at a low price.

866. Do you think there are more employed in weaving cassinets and merinos than there are in weaving valencias?—I should not wonder that there are as many, and perhaps more.

867. You have stated you cannot give the price for weaving those articles, neither in former years nor at present?—No; I have stated to the Committee there were not above a dozen persons present at the meeting called by the magistrates; there were five or six makers of fancy goods, three or four cloth manufacturers, and two or three other descriptions. I mentioned that I only received information that I was to come up on the Saturday night, and I came off on Monday morning; therefore those extracts had to be taken on the Monday morning before I set off.

868. Had you no intimation that you were likely to come up to London to give evidence?—Yes; I met with those manufacturers on the Tuesday previously, but the meeting was so thin, and the observation that I should go or not by no means general, therefore I refused to go.

869. Did you not, either by your books or in conversation with others, prepare your mind in any way excepting between the Saturday night, when you received the summons, and the Monday morning, when you came from Huddersfield?—No.

870. You never turned it in your mind?—I had no opportunity of referring to the books till Monday morning.

871. You have weaver workmen at Almondbury?—Yes.

872. Does that work average now from 13 *s.* to 20 *s.*?—The average is as I have stated; the average from the period I have stated is below that as a whole, but I think they do run between 13 *s.* to 20 *s.*

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873. It is from Almondbury those extreme cases were brought on the former occasion?—Yes; and we always had workmen at Almondbury.

874. Almondbury lies in a corner of Huddersfield, does it not?—It lies nearly south of Huddersfield.

875. Did you ever know a long continued slackness of demand without lowering the rate of wages?—Why it would be scarcely possible.

876. Did you ever know a long continued briskness of demand without increasing the rate of wages?—It frequently happens.

877. I ask you whether you have ever known a long continued briskness of demand in your market without increasing the rate of wages?—Occasionally; where wages were considered adequate, the weavers might make by constant employment a greater sum per week.

878. Do you mean to say that such is the state of trade at this present time, that if there be an occasional briskness the effect of that would not be to raise the wages, but merely to give more constant employment?—Sometimes wages have been advanced, as I stated before; wages rose a little about two years ago.

879. You were asked a question with regard to slackness, and you stated that at certain times of the year there was a seasonable slackness,—spring and winter; has there been any kind of slackness besides those in the last seven or ten years?—Occasionally there is a general slackness, in consequence of the fashion; perhaps cotton prints take for waistcoating instead of light-coloured valencias.

880. Have those sorts of casual slacknesses been more frequent within the last 10 years than they were in the previous 10 years?—I think they have been rather more frequent.

881. When the condition of the weavers of Almondbury was bettered, (which it was, as you state,) was that in consequence of a greater demand for labour—that there was more work for them to do?—No doubt.

882. You stated the other day when you were under examination, that although you doubted the propriety or efficacy of legislative interference, yet you would recommend the publication periodically of the names of manufacturers and the rate of wages they did pay, and when pressed to give your reason for that, you used the word "exposure." The Committee did not quite understand what you meant. The word exposure would imply commonly that there was a degree of blame attached to the person who paid low wages, and that the knowledge of that fact would operate favourably in preventing it; was that your meaning?—I will state expressly what I meant: I meant that by the publication of the rate of wages that each manufacturer was giving, the weaver would know where the best wages were given, and the master would know where the worst were given.

883. You used the word "exposure;" do you think it possible that a sort of moral stigma might attach on certain individuals whose names should there be published, and who gave the low wages?—That is my opinion.

884. And they would rather that it was not published?—Yes.

885. Are not the masters who give the highest wages now pretty well known to the weaver, and the weaver who works at low wages pretty well known to his fellows?—I dare say they are.

886. You have stated you pay 19 *d.* and 20 *d.* a dozen for weaving figured valencias, and 12 *d.* for weaving plain ones?—Yes.

887. How long have you paid that rate of wages?—Between two and three years.

888. Did you before that period pay more or less?—Why, that described at 20 *d.* we were not taking; those at 19 *d.* we paid 18 *d.* for before that period, and nothing for silk warp dressing. The advance was 1 *d.* per dozen upon the weaving, and an extra payment for silk warp dressing.

889. Did you ever pay men more than 19 *d.* since you became a manufacturer?—Nineteen-pence and twenty-pence; that is, the 20 *d.* was given in consequence of the machines or larger counts.

890. Then for plain ones, have you paid more or less than 12 *d.*?—I believe we gave rather less than 12 *d.* previous to the advance; about 11 *d.* per dozen.

891. Then your wages have not altered more than 1 *d.* a dozen for a great many years?—For a number of years.

892. Now, you stated it was your opinion that your weavers were getting from 13 *s.* to 20 *s.* a week; and you have given in a statement here of the earnings of 13 weavers, which you have extracted from your own books, and I find the average of those 13 to be 11 *s.* 4 *d.* Now, if you are so much mistaken in your own

own opinion as to the earnings of those weavers when you come to compare their actual earnings by your own books, what reason have you for thinking that your opinion has not always been erroneous on that subject?—The general fact that the period alluded to has been a period of slackness.

893. But have you ever made a comparison of the opinions you entertain and the wages you actually paid, by inspection from your own books in the same way on any former occasion?—Not lately.

894. Did you ever make a comparison between your own opinion as to what they did earn and as to what they actually earned, as shown by your own books?—I never venture on an opinion of that description but from actual calculation. From one or two statements that I had previously drawn out I, drew that opinion from the bulk of them, and the average is less.

895. Then any manufacturer employing 200 weavers, as you do, may select a few out of the 200 whose wages would far exceed the majority of the weavers?—Yes, they might do so, because there is a difference as to the ability of workmen to do a good quantity of work; and there is a great deal of difference in the disposition and circumstances of the men to do their work: a man may be a very good workman, and have a very large family, that both does his work well and a good deal of it.

896. Now you have stated a weaver has some outgoings out of this 11*s.* 4*d.* which your average makes; have you taken the three together?—I have taken the three.

897. Can you state what is the number of weavers in any given week, and what is the whole amount of wages that you have paid in that week?—No.

898. You can turn to your accounts or your memory to state about what number of workmen or about what amount of wages you paid in any one single week in the last six months?—Yes.

899. Did you pay them weekly?—They are paid every day, as they bring their work in.

900. You keep books?—The gross amount is carried into our cash account every two or three days.

901. If you had had a little more time you could, from your books, have answered that?—Yes; I beg leave to state most distinctly to the Committee, that I am completely dissatisfied with the result of that statement, and that, if this Committee thinks proper, I will write home for the result of the work of the very same weavers for the whole 12 months,—and I am satisfied the result will be more than I have stated,—with any other information they think proper.

902. Can you tell from your books what number of weavers you employ?—Yes, exactly.

903. How do you ascertain the number of weavers from your books?—We have them down in our books.

904. Have any weavers more than one loom?—Yes; if there are three or four weavers in a family, every weaver has his distinct name and his distinct loom, and is paid for his work as he can bring it in; as he brings the cuttings in.

905. Can you state the number of men you employ, and the amount of wages?—Yes.

906. Then the weavers employed by you are in your employ only, and not in the employ of any other manufacturer?—No; I do not know that any such cases occurred; perhaps one or two cases may have occurred when we were slack of work, where a weaver would say, "I will get a warp of another manufacturer;" in a very peculiar case we have allowed them to do so.

907. Then in slack times they do apply to other manufacturers for work, when you are not able to give them work?—Yes; such is the state of trade, and the varying from one thing to another, that one manufacturer of the same kind of goods may be very busy and another very slack; for instance, he may bring out a pattern that takes very much, and be very busy, while another, having made equal exertions, may be very slack.

908. Then, although you take the amount of earnings of all the weavers employed by you, either for a week or a month, it does not necessarily follow that that is all they have earned during that time; they may have earned something from other manufacturers?—Yes, or from other local situations. I have no doubt if our weavers go without work for a few days, as they do occasionally, they get any

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any description of out-door work, or any description of work, if they can get it, particularly in hay-time and harvest.

909. During hay-time and harvest they are employed in that manner?—Yes.

910. Are you the largest manufacturer in Dalton?—I believe not.

911. Do you know Mr. Senior?—Yes.

912. He is in the same line of business?—Yes, and he is doing more than us.

913. And his weavers are of the same description?—Yes; and so far as I know, we have both given the same wages.

914. But sometimes the same weavers may be employed by you and also at the same time by Mr. Senior?—No, I am not aware that is the case.

915. They may sometimes get work from the one, and sometimes from the other?—If any work is got from any other manufacturer it is of the plain description; you see it is very difficult to move gearing out of a loom for two distinct manufactures.

916. Out of the whole body of between 200 and 300 that you employed during the last 12 months, there are a certain number, perhaps 100 or 150, that have been in constant employ by you, are there not?—Yes.

917. Is it not sometimes the case that another manufacturer will put a warp through the same gear, a warp of the same pattern and description?—No.

918. What wages will a person of from 12 to 14 years of age earn?—The statement I gave in will be the best answer to that; the average is from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 11*s.* 9*d.* per week.

919. Supposing a table with compulsory prices were adopted, how would you deal with workmen of inferior abilities?—There would not be such difficulty as you imagine, from the circumstance that he is paid by the hank which he weaves; the fewer the hanks the less wages he would get.

920. But in taking a workman of inferior abilities, you are obliged to pay him so much a day, if he is not able to turn out the particular quantity?—I can show you one particular case of the extreme situation in which manufacturers of our description are placed with reference to bad workmen. We gave out a loom a few weeks ago, for which we gave the man for drawing in 12*s.*; we paid him 7*s.* 6*d.* for dressing his warp; that is 19*s.* 6*d.* for his work; he came back and said he could not weave it; we had to take it out of his work, and the 12*s.* was lost; and he brought the warp dressed upon our hands, which we conceive next to being lost, in consequence of being brought in in that state.

921. Could you not punish him?—Well, I have no doubt I might have done; but the man was so disabled, I considered the man had a most unfortunate thing of it; he had fastened himself with the work, and though he had 19*s.* 6*d.* from us for his work, he had been nearly a month in trying to make the work do, and could not succeed.

922. He was not a skilful workman?—No.

923. Is it your object in your particular branch to select the cleverest workmen?—Of course.

924. You state that in paying piece-work you would not have so much difficulty as what might be supposed?—No, not more than what occurs now.

925. If there is a fixed rate of wages, and a man does not do sufficient work in the way of piece-work to make that, would you consider yourself bound to pay up to the table to make up the deficiency to him?—No; for imperfect work we should make a reduction.

926. Did you receive any information or instruction from the meeting which appointed you?—No; the observation made respecting my appointment was so ambiguous, that I paid no attention to it; it was the clerk of the justice of peace that handed my name here.

Veneris, 3° die Aprilis, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

John Boyd, called in; and Examined.

John Boyd.

3 April 1835.

927. WHAT is your occupation?—A Hand-loom Weaver.

928. In what line?—In the lawn book-muslin.

929. Where are you from?—Belfast, or close to it.

930. You are in the cotton trade?—Yes.

931. How long have you been connected with the cotton trade?—Somewhere about 23 years.

932. What is your opinion, from your own knowledge, of the state of the trade at this present moment, as compared with its condition when you first joined it?—It has greatly fallen off in price; the number of weavers has increased, and I think the production is more extensive.

933. Are there more weavers than there were?—There is not, I think, in the immediate vicinity of Belfast; but I should think, from my own knowledge, that it is more spread through the country.

934. But not in the neighbourhood of Belfast?—There are some parts immediately in the vicinity of it where it has fallen off.

935. Do you think there is a falling off in the number of weavers in Belfast?—In some parts; in some of the immediate districts.

936. Then where has the increase taken place?—Through the country parts, within a circuit of 10 or 15 miles.

937. Can you at all account for the increase in the country parts, and the falling off in the town?—I think a good part of that is owing to the falling off in the wages. It is more convenient in some parts to live in the country than in town.

938. What do you mean by being more convenient; is it cheaper?—Yes, the the rents are so much cheaper; but still there are other inconveniences which might, to a certain extent, counterbalance that.

939. Is it in consequence of the falling off in wages that persons have left the town, in order that they might live cheaper in the country?—Yes.

940. Can you at all state what the fall has been since the time you were connected with the trade?—I can give the Committee scales of prices from the year 1792 up to the present year.

941. Where did you obtain those scales from?—They have been preserved by certain individuals; some of them are scales or compacts that were entered into between the employers and the operatives.

942. How did they happen to come into your possession?—They were preserved by some individuals as mementos of old times; at the time they were generally scattered amongst the weavers, and they were preserved by some individuals.

943. At what time were they generally scattered?—At the time that the agreements were formed.

944. Have they been kept in the hands of any committee?—No; individuals who became possessed of them at the time that these agreements came to be formed; several were printed agreements.

945. But are they general agreements, or agreements of particular masters with particular men; individual agreements: are they well authenticated?—I can show the scales; here is a fragment of one (*handing it in.*)

946. Are you acquainted with any of the parties?—No, I believe there are but few of the manufacturers at present in the trade in Belfast, whose names are attached to that document.

947. Are they dead, or what is become of them?—They are either dead, or otherwise out of the trade; that scale is for 1810.

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948. This is cotton weaving?—Yes, exclusively so: here is one.

The Committee.]—You had better begin with 1792.

[*The Witness handed in one of* 1792; vide *Appendix.*]

949. Have you got nothing between 1792 and 1810?—No; here is a printed scale for 1818, and here is one for the present.

[*Handing them in*; vide *Appendix.*]

950. Have you nothing between 1818 and the present time?—No, I have no scales; but here is a comparative scale I drew out from my own knowledge, working the fabric up to nearly the present time.

951. From 1818?—From 1812 or 1813.

952. Does your own scale comprehend both a period before 1813, and subsequent to 1813?—Yes.

953. Where is your own scale?—Here it is (*handing it in.*) It is a comparative scale, showing the different prices.

954. Then, according to your own scale, there has been a gradual reduction from 1792 to 1835?—Yes.

955. In what do you call the article?—It is a 20 $^{00}\frac{2}{8}$ stout jaconet.

956. How much was paid in 1792?—The price is marked in the scale.

957. Two shillings and ten-pence per ell, 46 inches; was that the price?—I believe so.

958. In 1802, the same article had fallen to 2 *s.* 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.*?—Yes.

959. In 1810, it had fallen to 1 *s.* 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.*—Yes.

960. In 1812, it had fallen to 1 *s.* 6 *d.*?—Yes.

961. In 1818, it had fallen to 1 *s.* $\frac{3}{8}$ *d.*?—Yes.

962. In 1820, it had fallen to 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ *d.*?—Yes.

963. In 1826, it had fallen to 6 *d.*?—Yes.

964. In 1835, it had fallen to 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ *d.*?—Yes.

965. Do you at all know, or can you at all account for this great fall in price?—There are different causes, and I would say a combination of causes, though I think it has been principally out of home competition.

966. Will you explain what you mean by home competition?—One manufacturer under-paying, and consequently under-selling his neighbour.

967. Has that home competition taken place more since there became a necessity for a great reduction in wages?—I think from one document I am possessed of it has been gradually coming down from 1807 to the present time, and it has not ceased yet.

968. Do you remember at all any circumstance in 1807, which gave rise to this greater home competition?—No; but this document that I have here is a petition that was drawn out, I think it was in 1812, and presented to the sovereign at Belfast; and there is some information concerning what was looked for at that period in this.

969. Was there as much of this home competition when you first joined the trade in 1813, as there is now?—I was not for paying so much attention to it at that period as I have done since; but from what I have thought of the cause, I conceive at that period it was more extensive, or shortly after it, for this reason, there was a more extensive field for reduction. It cannot go now to the extent it did then, because the wages will not afford it. The Committee will see the reduction there is on that one fabric.

970. When did the weavers first begin to complain most of this home competition?—I could not positively state that, when it first commenced; only it has been generally felt as a grievance since I came to be acquainted with the trade.

971. Are there any other causes besides this home competition to which you attribute the fall in price?—Yes, I conceive there are several minor causes.

972. Will you describe them, such as the general opinion of the weavers as to the cause?—Generally speaking, it is not altogether looked into; it is not properly understood by the general body.

973. But the intelligent of them?—Yes; it is attributed by some, and that would be my feeling, to the effect of what is vulgarly called Peel's Currency Bill on machinery.

974. Can you describe how Peel's Currency Bill has affected the weavers?—To be more concise on the case, I have given some of my views on paper here since I came

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I came to town; I thought, perhaps, it might answer the purpose of the Committee as well to be brief.

975. *The Committee.*]—Perhaps you had better read it?—I have conceived that it has been the cause of reducing the quantity of money, or of contracting the currency; now, under such circumstances as these, it must be a general evil to the country. The higher the circulation of money in these cases so much the better: as we stand on artificial ground as compared with the rest of Europe, this becomes necessary, on account of the great burden of the national debt of the country; for an artificial burden to bear, it becomes absolutely necessary that it should have artificial means of support. If the value of labour be 200,000,000 *l.* yearly, and the taxation 50,000,000 *l.*, it is clear that there is one-fourth of it taxation, paid out of this 200,000,000 *l.* We shall suppose then by Peel's Bill, or any other measure, the currency is restricted to 100,000,000 *l.*, being still the yearly value of labour; if we pay still 50,000,000 *l.* it makes the burden double. I might also add with safety, that if the income of other classes, productive and unproductive, were reduced proportionally as the weavers are, it would be impossible to pay the taxation, and a national bankruptcy would be the inevitable consequence.

976. Is that paper your own drawing up?—Yes.

977. You have written that since you came to town?—Yes.

978. Is there any other cause? do you attribute any of the fall in the weavers' wages to machinery?—Yes, somewhat so; to a certain extent so. Wherever it comes in to assist manual labour, it ought to be encouraged; but when it comes to supersede manual labour, it ought to be restricted, for these reasons: it has a direct tendency, in its mode of operation, ultimately to demoralize society, by monopolizing into the pockets of the few, that which was divided as the price of labour amongst the many, and thus tending to keep in a wholesome state the strings that move society. It can be little consolation to the working man that the machine that has deprived him and his family of bread offers him a particular necessary at a cheaper rate than ever he had it offered to him before, for without his usual wages he can purchase it at no price; neither is it any consolation that the public is advantaged just now, or that he or his class be advantaged hereafter; he cannot but see that the immediate advantage of the public is his immediate loss, and as a workman has seldom more than his week's wages to look to, he is thus brought face to face with starvation. It acted on the cotton trade as an influx of hands to the same amount of its production, and by tending to cheapen the article, it attracted new consumers. The evil occasioned by the power-loom is not altogether confined to England and Scotland, it is felt by the trade in Ireland, for it can be sold cheaper in Manchester than Belfast.

979. Do weavers in the neighbourhood of Belfast conceive the power-loom to be one great cause of reduction in their wages?—I have not altogether attributed the cause to its full extent in that; I have taken two views; how it acted on society generally, and how it acted on certain classes particularly.

980. Is there a general impression in the neighbourhood of Belfast that the power-loom has been one of the great causes of the reduction in their wages?—Yes, it is felt so to a certain extent.

981. Do you remember when the power-loom first came into operation?—No.

982. Did it come into operation before the time you were connected with the trade, or subsequent to that time?—I cannot say; I cannot perfectly recollect the particular time.

983. You must recollect, there or thereabouts; did it begin 10 or 15 years ago, or when?—It might be 1815, or it might be after. It might be even at an earlier period than that.

984. You do not know anything about it?—No, I do not recollect.

985. Are there no power-looms in the neighbourhood of Belfast?—Yes, there are a few.

986. How long have they been established there?—I could not answer that question directly.

987. Are there many in the neighbourhood?—I have not an exact list of them. I suppose there might be in the surrounding districts perhaps 500 or 600 or more. I have not the scale; I do not give in this as a fact.

988. But do the weavers complain of the power-loom as taking away their employment?—It is the coarser fabric that it injures.

989. Then does the power-loom come into competition with the fabric which you work?—No. I defy the power-loom to work the fabric I am making.

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990. Then, if you defy the power-loom to work the fabric which you work, the power-loom can hardly be said to be the cause of the reduction of wages?—No, not particularly on that fabric; only it might come in for to act to the general injury of that fabric. I have attempted by this paper to define how it came in to act upon that.

991. Are the hand-loom weavers generally employed on the same fabric as you are in the neighbourhood of Belfast?—No, they are not all employed on that fabric, for the trade of Belfast includes many different fabrics.

992. Does the power-loom come into competition with any of the fabrics worked up by the hand-loom weavers?—Yes, the coarser; such as old men or boys generally work.

993. Are there more persons engaged in working up the coarser or the finer fabrics in your neighbourhood?—In the district which I come from there is very little coarse work done, but speaking generally, there is a great deal of it through the country.

994. How many looms for hand-loom weavers are there in Belfast and its immediate vicinity?—I have a scale here of the number.

[*The same was handed in, and is as follows:*]

NUMBER of HAND-LOOM WEAVERS in the vicinity of *Belfast*.

Names of Districts.	Number of Looms.	Names of Districts.	Number of Looms.
Brown-square	170	Troopers-field & Blaris	350
Sandy-row	190	Magheragill	400
Carrick-hill	65	Boardmills	750
Gooseberry-corner	120	Ballinahinch	300
1. Ballymacerett	154	Dernaghey	600
2. Ballymacerett	89	Kandalstown	2,000
3. Ballymacerett	64	Antrim, Toeme, &c.	1,000
4. Ballymacerett	154	Newlodge	50
5. Ballymacerett	100	Carrickfergus	300
6. Ballymacerett	69	Carnmoney, High Town & Hyde-Park	160
7. Ballymacerett	87	Drumbo	200
Castlereagh	54	Monyreah	80
Lisburn	806	Lionabreen	60
Lower Maze	274	Greyabbey	120
Longlash	290	Donaghadee	100
Maze-road	170	Moira	120
Kilwarlin	500	Hillsborough	140
Newtownards	470	Dromore	200
Bangor	277	Stonyford	90
Broomhedge	300		
Annahitt	400	Total, as near as can be ascertained	10,773

In general, those weavers are all employed from Belfast, with the exception of two or three small capitalists in Lisburn. Some of the Belfast manufacturers employ four agents. What is not done by agents is done by carriers, who bring the work from the employer to the weaver, and return it back again, for which he receives a certain sum per piece, according to the distance.

995. Have you any scale which will show the variation that has taken place in the number of weavers since 1790, in the same way in which you have shown a difference of price?—No.

996. Has the number decreased latterly, or increased?—I think I answered that, or gave all the information I could upon that question.

997. How many of these are employed by Scotch agents?—Here is a paper which shows hands employed by eight Scotch houses in Belfast, and cash paid per month; 2,500 hands, 2,800 *l.* paid monthly; expenses incurred about 10 per cent.

998. By whom are the expenses incurred?—That is for the carriage of the yarns backwards and forwards to the establishment.

999. Who pays those expenses?—The manufacturers.

1000. Is there any other cause now that you would attribute the reduction in wages to?—Yes, there is apprentices; the easy way which individuals can become initiated into the trade injures it.

1001. You mean by over-stocking the trade with too many apprentices?—Yes.

1002. Give us the reasons.—I think it would be desirable that the common indenture

indenture were made legal for five years apprentices, and that no individual should be put to the trade under 12 years of age; that said indenture should be bought for 2*s.* 6*d.* or 5*s.*; it would thus prevent the influx of hands that can at present get into the mysteries of the trade; for after one or two years service the individual thus partly learned is thrown loose on the trade an imperfect workman, and that has a direct tendency to reduce the trade, by producing an inferior article.

1003. Is that a general impression in your neighbourhood?—Yes, I believe it is. I have been speaking to numbers on that head, and I find they all agree in it, because the thing is so self-evident that it calls loudly for redress.

1004. What do they think these apprentices should do for their existence if they cannot get employment; supposing there were a number of young men who were looking out for their livelihood, just as weavers are now, what would the weavers have these young men do?—Just the same as other trades do. I would conceive that that observation of mine would not apply to any individual who had a family, or even supposing the case to be so, that it would help individuals who had families and meant to put their children to the same occupation they filled themselves. I think it would be of most essential service to have them bound to them. It is often the case, under existing circumstances, that as soon as they get a little catch of the mysteries of the trade, they leave their places.

1005. Is hand-loom weaving so difficult to learn that it requires very long application to it?—It is not very difficult to learn the mysteries of it at first; but notwithstanding I can work tolerably well myself, I conceive that I am always progressing in it; that I am not perfect at it yet.

1006. Would that be the case in coarse work, where you stated the distress was greatest?—The coarser the fabric, generally the easier it is caught.

1007. Is there any other cause you would attribute this reduction to?—There is one particular thing, but it is a ground I would like to tread very easy on, and that is "embezzlement."

1008. Do you mean there is an embezzlement of the yarn?—Yes; but if the Committee will permit me to go on with this statement, I will explain afterwards how it comes. It is certainly a great evil in the trade, for embezzled wefts can be purchased cheaper than from a warehouse; it has often been the case that individuals have commenced by purchasing a few cops from one and a few from another, and when they got a sufficient quantity, sorting them till they got as much as made a warp, and then the weft was easy to procure, and this could be sent to market a great deal cheaper than the fair trader could manufacture it; and a number of pieces sold in this manner has had the effect, along with the grasping propensity of some employers, to reduce the wages. Now I would wish to be particularly understood on this point. I do not attribute this embezzlement altogether to the weavers; I conceive it to be altogether impossible that they could embezzle to any great extent, and the reason is this: the manufacturers can calculate to one quarter of an ounce how much weft of any given number they will put on a given number of shots; if the weaver do not put the number of shots on that is inserted in the ticket, he is liable to be fined afterwards, that is, the weaver's wages are reduced for not having the work properly finished. If he puts too much shots on, he overruns his weft, and consequently has to account for it himself. These are the reasons, to a certain extent, why this embezzlement cannot altogether belong to the weaving class. But there are certain fabrics that are made in Belfast, where the coloured yarn comes from Scotland, that has a deal worse effect on some particular branches of the trade than what that has that I have just stated.

1009. In what way does the coloured yarn produce a bad effect on the trade?—It comes over as embezzled. It never could be sold so cheap if that were not the case. It is generally coloured yarn.

1010. If the weavers do not embezzle the yarn, who are the parties mainly that you do consider embezzle it?—I have never been in Scotland, and as to what extent it is done and who are the parties, I cannot say.

1011. The effect of this embezzlement is, that either the parties who embezzle or sell as embezzled, yarn at a cheaper rate, enables parties to manufacture so cheaply that the fair trader is obliged to reduce the wages of the weaver in order to bring his goods into competition with those manufactured with embezzled yarn?—Yes, to a certain extent.

1012. Do you think this takes place to any great extent?—I may say there are a number of individuals who follow it as a practice, that is, bringing it over from Scotland.

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1013. How long has this practice been in existence?—For a considerable time, I conceive, I could not say the date of it, but I have heard of the thing being practised, I suppose this 15 or 16 years. It might have been previous to that.

1014. How much less will embezzled yarn, do you imagine, sell for in the market; these people who obtain it by fraudulent means, what price under the market price do you imagine they sell their yarn at?—They certainly sell it a considerable deal cheaper than it can be purchased at from a regular warehouse; generally speaking, it is not so regular in its assortment as the other.

1015. Then it is not so much in real value?—No, certainly; but at the same time, if it produces the article that it sells for less, and enables the individual so producing it to remunerate himself and undersell the fair trader, it produces an injury to trade.

1016. But if it comes in an imperfect shape to market, it cannot be manufactured at the same expense as if it were in good order?—What I meant by that was,—the imperfection that I alluded to was, that it was not so regular in its assortment; that is, the numbers, I would conceive, were not all so equal as if it had been purchased out of any regular warehouse.

1017. Do the weavers assign any cause for this practice of embezzlement?—No, I never heard any particular reason assigned; anything I heard on the subject was only vague.

1018. Did they assign as a cause, that persons who used to be able to make a profit are not now able to make so good a profit, and therefore go through a new practice in order to accomplish the practice that used to obtain?—It is only calculation upon that, for the employers in Belfast generally keep their own business close to themselves, that the weavers can only make calculations.

1019. Then you know nothing of the nature of the profits of a manufacturer?—No.

1020. What do you conceive to be the average wages of a weaver in your district at the present moment per week?—I have divided them into three classes, for the sake of giving the Committee more full information upon the point. 1st. Individuals who are possessed of good head and hands, who, by their superior ingenuity, can work a finer fabric, and produce more of it; they average about from 6 *s.* to 6 *s.* 6 *d.* per week. This is the first class.

1021. What proportion of the whole weavers do you imagine these are that you speak of as getting 6 *s.* 6 *d.* a week, and engaged in the finer fabric?—They constitute the least portion of them.

1022. Of the 10,000 looms, how many do you imagine are worked by the more intelligent and industrious?—I really could not answer the question directly.

1023. What proportion should you say, a half, a third, a fourth or a fifth?—They would not constitute a fifth; nothing like it. That is, directly of the finer fabrics.

1024. Would they consitute a tenth, do you think? Would there be 1,000 out of 10,000?—It might reach that, or somewhere thereabouts; but it is only conjecture.

1025. How many hours do these persons work in a day to realize this 6 *s.* 6 *d.* per week?—They generally work from 14 to 16, and often 18 hours.

1026. To realize this 6 *s.* 6 *d.* per week?—Yes.

1027. Exclusive of the time for meals?—No, taken altogether.

1028. But how many hours do they work of the 24 to get 6 *s.* 6 *d.* a week, the best weavers?—I have said from 14 to 16.

1029. But how many hours do you allow for food?—That depends on the hours that are taken for food; in one place there is no given time for that, for any individual, if he chooses, can take only a few minutes, and if he chooses to go instantly again to his work he can; there is no compulsion in that case.

1030. But what the Committee wish to know is, how many is the average number of hours of labour?—I might calculate that, perhaps, at an hour and a half.

1031. For meals?—Yes.

1032. That is three hours in the day?—No, an hour and a half.

1033. But there are many actually work 14 hours, you think?—Yes; that is the lowest average, 14; and in the latter part of the week often 18; and in some instances more than that.

1034. Do you work in some factory or in your own houses at Belfast?—We have no factory.

1035. It is all domestic work?—All domestic.

1036. You all work in your own houses?—Yes, all domestic.

1037. Then you can work any time you please, either long or short?—Yes, as necessity calls for.

1038. But on the fabrics that you are now speaking of, does it require a weaver actually to work 14 hours a day to get from 6 *s.* to 6 *s.* 6 *d.* a week?—Yes.

1039. Now is this 6 *s.* 6 *d.* all clear to the weaver?—No.

1040. What comes against it?—If the Committee would permit me to go on with this, I will answer the question directly. I have another scale for that: 2d. Individuals who are not possessed of these advantages to such an extent, who generally finish their work that there is no fines off it, but cannot produce such a superior article; when work grows flat they are generally cast before the prime workman. They average from about 5 *s.* to 5 *s.* 6 *d.* a week.

1041. Now how many of the 10,000 looms do you imagine belong to those who get from 5 *s.* to 5 *s.* 6 *d.* a week?—It is only another case of conjecture.

1042. But about? Is that the great proportion of the weavers?—Yes; when we deduct the 1,000 off, then we divide the proportion between the other two.

1043. Then this is the largest proportion of the whole, you think?—I should think the third class to be the largest.

1044. Then would you think this class would be a third of the whole?—Yes, I might say so.

1045. Does this second class work as long hours as the first class?—Yes; there is little or no difference. The third class is men who are not complete tradesmen; who are confined to the coarser fabrics of work, and often liable to deductions for not finishing their work in a proper style; they average from 3 *s.* 6 *d.* to 4 *s.* 6 *d.*

1046. And those form the rest of the 10,000?—Yes.

1047. Do these work as long hours as the others?—Yes; I conceive that there is little change in their hours of work.

1048. Now, are these persons in regular employment throughout the year?—Yes; they have been so this considerable time. Employment has been plentiful though the wages have been bad.

1049. For how long?—I have not heard of any individuals being idle for want of employment these two or three years.

1050. Before these two or three years, was there a greater slackness of employment?—In the district that I belong to, and in other districts convenient to it, I do not recollect any extensive idleness since 1826.

1051. Now, can you state the wages that were gained by these same classes in 1812? Can you tell the scale of gainings when you were first acquainted with the trade; the first class?—It generally ran from 1 *l.* to 2 *l.* a week for their earnings. I have heard calico weavers say (and that is the coarsest fabric) that they had earned at that period, and some time before it, 1 *l.* 2 *s.* 9 *d.* per week. That was a guinea at that period.

1052. Is that the first class that you think gained that?—No, the lowest class.

1053. And what did the highest class gain?—I might say 1 *l.* or 2 *l.* per week.

1054. Ordinary wages?—Ordinary wages, from 1 *l.* to 2 *l.*

1055. In 1812?—Yes, or previous to that some time.

1056. But the Committee want only your knowledge; you entered the trade at that period, did you not?—It was some time about that. It would be only from information of others that I could make statements, for I entered it early; I was only somewhere about 10 years of age when I entered it.

1057. What were the highest wages that you ever got at any period of your life per week for 14 hours' labour?—I really could not recollect; however, there is one thing that I might observe to the Committee that would elucidate that point: the fabric that I weave at the present time, I have 5 ¼ *d.* an ell for it; and at that period I would have had upwards of 2 *s.* 6 *d.* for it.

1058. What are you at present getting per week in that which you are now occupied in for 14 hours?—My present rate of earnings?

1059. Yes.—For to speak personally for myself would be giving the trade no fair play, for I often follow other occupations, what is called twisting; consequently, when I am occupied in this way I am not occupied in weaving.

1060. Any week you can now give, what would be your average weekly gainings as a weaver 14 hours a day employed in weaving; the Committee do not ask what are your wages when employed in other matters?—It comes constantly; almost every week I may be twisting one or two webs, perhaps more.

 1061. But

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1061. But have you never in a week been employed during the whole week as a weaver?—Yes; but that, I would conceive, would be nothing to take the average from.

1062. The point the Committee want to ascertain is, what in your own experience, in your own particular case, has been the greatest fluctuation; whatas a weaver can you get now in making these jaconets in which you are employed, and what is the highest wages you ever received as a weaver for the same work per week?—At the period when I commenced for those 20 jaconets, they were paying 1 *s.* 6 *d.*, if I understand the question.

1063. As a weaver working 14 hours a day, now what could you gain per week?—To weave two pieces of that fabric, it would be good work to keep it up constantly, 24 yards of it.

1064. That would make how much?—Twenty-four yards a-week.

1065. At 5 ¼ *d.*?—No, the 20 jaconets is 3 ⅞ *d.*

1066. That would be between 7 *s.* and 8 *s.* a-week?—Scarcely so much.

1067. Then you do not include such work as you in the highest class of weavers do; you say they get 6 *s.* 6 *d.* as the greatest gainings?—Yes, generally speaking, it is 6 *s.* 6 *d.*

1068. You said there were 10,000 looms, that probably there were 1,000 of those worked by the first class, and the greatest sum gained by any weaver was 6 *s.* 6 *d.* per week?—Yes.

1069. Then if he could make two pieces at 3 ⅞ *d.* per yard, consisting of 24 yards, that is more?—I conceive there is a mistake in that calculation. It is by the ell that that is paid; he could not get between 7 *s.* and 8 *s.* for the two pieces. It only comes to somewhere about 6 *s.*

1070. What is your ell?—A yard and a quarter.

1071. Now then, taking 6 *s.*, what is the highest sum that at that period you have got for wages per week yourself?—Why for to take the same fabric and the same given production of it at 1 *s.* 6 *d.* per ell, say the same work was wove at that period as would be produced now, it would come to the point.

1072. Did the weavers work so hard and so long hours?—No.

1073. At the time that you were receiving 1 *s.* 6 *d.* per ell, the trade generally was receiving higher wages; you were then only 10 years old; you went into the trade at the time the wages were at the highest, and you were only 10 years old then?—I was 10 years old or somewhat upwards, when I commenced it, and I think that that was in 1811 or 1812. The wages were not reduced, at least to a great extent until 1816.

1074. Then, although the trade generally was receiving higher wages at that time, you were receiving only the wages of a child instead of the wages of a man?—Just what I could earn. It could not be expected at that period I could earn the same as I have done since, or could do now.

1075. But generally speaking, did the weavers produce as much work?—Certainly not.

1076. Because you stated in 1790, for instance, that they were paid 2 *s.* 10 *d.* for that for which they now get 3 ½ *d.*?—3 ⅞ *d.* A small mistake in figures will lead into larger mistakes afterwards.

1077. That is about nine times as much?—Yes.

1078. Therefore for the same work that you now get 6 *s.*, you would have then got nine times as much; you would have got 54 *s.* per week?—Yes.

1079. Did you ever hear any weaver say he got 54 *s.* per week?—Yes, but it was some particular fabrics, some kinds of fancy work.

1080. You stated jaconets, those for which in 1790 were paid 2 *s.* 10 *d.*, are now paid 3 ⅞ *d.*?—Yes.

1081. Those were jaconets?—Yes, 20 jaconets.

1082. How many shots in each?—Generally six constitute our stout jaconets, it goes from that to eight.

1083. How many splits are there in the inch?—It is from the number of shots that our calculation is made, I mean the shots over the square, that would be from 26 to 28, from 26 to 28 shots on an average.

1084. In an inch of cloth?—Yes, it would be five times that, and a fractional part over, somewhere about 135 shots to the inch.

1085. Five times 26, that would be 130 shots in an inch?—Yes, or 135.

1086. I think you stated the number of looms had not increased in your recollection?—Immediately in the vicinity of the town or of some of the districts.

1087. Of

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1087. Of these 10,000, in the district covered by these, is the number of looms more or less than it was when you first recollect the trade, in the same district?—Some districts of Belfast were at that period, or from the time that I recollect it; they were more numerous than what they are at the present, certainly.

1088. Do you think there were more or less weavers when you were ten years old than there are now?—There were more weavers in some districts at that time than there are now, and at present there are numbers more in some districts than what there were at that period.

1089. But on the whole?—I could not say.

1090. Do you think there were 10,000 in your district when you first entered the trade?—I could not say to the fact.

1091. In the same district of which you have given this return?—I could not say positively.

1092. Are there many persons employed in making hand-looms still?—No, not so many employed in that now as have been, for weavers are necessitated to put up a kind of machinery now that they formerly would not have done.

1093. You mean that the machinery is not so good now as it formerly was?—Yes.

1094. You think the looms themselves are not so good now as they were in your boyhood?—No, certainly not; they are wearing out; and I see very few looms replaced.

1095. You do not think that the number of looms introduced is so many as the looms that go out of use?—Certainly not.

1096. You have given the comparative difference of wages between the present period and 1812; what is the difference in the wages you were receiving in 1819 and this time?—The scale is there for 1818.

1097. Then you were receiving three times as much wages in 1820 as you were in 1810 for the same work; there are 10 $\frac{3}{8}$ *d.* per ell 46 inches in 1820, and 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ *d.* in 1834 and 1835?—Yes.

1098. The wages of 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ *d.*, are they the general wages now paid by all the manufacturers?—No, there is at the present no general scale; in fact, every individual pays as he chooses himself.

1099. But on what have you founded this return of 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ *d.*, is this founded on the highest or the lowest wages?—From the scale of 1835 that I got from one house.

1100. But are these the general wages paid by the manufacturers of Belfast, or have you taken a house that is supposed to be one of the houses that pay high wages, or a house that pays low wages?—No, not quite: I have taken that scale from the other scales, and from the recollection which I had of it myself working a considerable time at that very fabric that I have entered there.

1101. Do you think, for instance, that 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ *d.* for these jaconets, that that is about the average rate of wages paid at Belfast?—I have before stated that there were scarcely two manufacturers paid the same price.

1102. What is the highest price you know of for this work, and what is the lowest, as you say there are many? The weavers of course inquire among themselves as to who give good wages and who give indifferent wages, and prefer the house that pays well?—It is generally the case; but it is a thing I either neglected, or it has escaped my recollection.

1103. From your general impression, should you say there are more persons receiving a higher rate than 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ *d.*, or that there is a greater number of persons receiving less than 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ *d.*?—If I had brought the different scales with me that I have got, they would have solved the question.

1104. But you know, when you made out this list, whether you took the prices from a house that gave good ordinary fair wages, or from a house that gave something which you considered below the average price?—I have before stated to the Committee that that comparative scale that I gave in to the Committee, I took at first from the different scales that came into my possession, from my own recollection working that particular fabric in 1826 that I had wrought in 1813. It is not the fabric that I am at present working, and it is only from the scale that I can trace that price and I can state the facts; I really do not know.

1105. But do not you know what the general scale is?—I do not know what every manufacturer pays for that identical fabric.

1106. Then what information does this scale purport to give?—It gives the price of the different fabrics that a particular manufacturer pays at this time.

1107. Is this 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ *d.* the average wages paid by the manufacturers at Belfast for this

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this work?—That is a question that I cannot answer, for I have not a general scale for the present.

1108. Would these be the terms if men wanted to get work at the respectable houses?—I before stated to the Committee that almost every manufacturer has a particular mode of paying of his own, and without I had got the scales from every manufacturer or the scale that they paid for that fabric, I could not have come to the average.

1109. Then are the Committee to understand there are manufacturers at Belfast who pay less than $3\frac{7}{8}d.$?—It may be the case.

1110. Do you believe it to be the case? The Committee only want to know whether you have taken the average, or the lowest or the highest price?—I have been endeavouring to point that out to the Committee, that I had not taken the average; it was only from one particular manufacturer that I got that.

1111. Then do you think this represents the average price paid for weaving?—No, I do not.

1112. Is it lower or higher than the average wages?—It might be a criterion to a certain extent, and it might be either lower or higher; I cannot state what the average price is.

1113. You do not know any other but that that is a fair average of the rate of wages? Do you think it is a fair average of the rate of wages? Do you think it is a fair average of the rate of wages paid? Have you any reason to doubt its being a fair average?—Why, as a matter of opinion, I would say that I thought it might be somewhat perhaps under the average; it might be a shade under.

1114. How much?—I might say $4d.$ or $4\frac{1}{8}d.$; I might state that as the average price.

1115. Now $3\frac{7}{8}d.$, do you think that is as fair an average of the rate of wages at this time as $10\frac{3}{8}d.$ was a fair average in 1820?—It would be just I suppose much the same, but the average was not as fair in either case as what it was in 1818.

1116. Well then, in 1818 the wages were $1s.\ \frac{3}{8}d.$; do you think that the $3\frac{7}{8}d.$ is as fair an average now as $1s.\ \frac{3}{8}d.$ was in 1818?—No, and the reason is this; in 1818 it was a general compact that was entered into between the manufacturers and the operatives to pay a certain given sum for a given fabric; consequently, whatever sum that was entered must be the average for that fabric.

1117. That was the highest rate, then, was it not?—It was all paid the same then, now the difference is, in the present instance, it is one solitary employer's price that I have here, not the general price of the thing; I have endeavoured to state that.

1118. You have given in here the rate of wages at eight different periods?—Yes.

1119. Are the rates of those different periods taken from one single manufacturer as well as the rest; are all of them wages got and taken from a single manufacturer?—No.

1120. Are any other except the last?—There are three agreements I have taken from them, or compacts between the manufacturer and the workman.

1121. Which are the three?—1792, 1810, 1818.

1122. What do you mean by compacts?—Where the parties agree, the one to give and the other to receive a given price for a certain fabric.

1123. How long did those compacts last; the agreement to give and receive certain rates of wages?—As far as I could learn, there was little or no change from the year 1792 to the year 1797, and the agreement that was entered into in 1810, which was part of a scale; here you will see the names of the manufacturers. It might perhaps have stood for a twelvemonth, perhaps not so long. And the agreement of 1818 stood with some for 12 months, and with others not so long; for there was no compulsion to keep the agreement. Whenever they found that it suited their own interest they had the power of withdrawing from those agreements.

1124. Then, when did this practice end of the master and weaver entering into compacts to give and receive a certain rate of wages; when did it end?—There has been no compact since 1818.

1125. Now, do you remember in 1818, when the compact was entered into between the master and the weaver, for how long a period was that compact intended to operate; for any given number of months, or a year, or any longer period?—No, not as far as I can recollect of it; and I believe the document will bear me out in what I say, that there was no given time.

1126. The compact was entered into to give and receive a certain rate of wages

until some other understanding was come to?—Yes; or according to the circumstances of the times.

1127. And this compact was voluntarily entered into between the parties?—Yes.

1128. Now, can you tell the Committee, from your own knowledge, of the state of the provision-market in Belfast and the rate of rent; what you consider to be the lowest rate at which a weaver can support a family of two or three in a family per week. In the first place, how many, generally, are there in a family in your district?—There is from one to eight.

1129. Then say the whole family to consist of five?—I have taken the average here for four; that is, a man, his wife and two of a family.

1130. Well then, now give us what you conceive to be the lowest rate at which a weaver can support himself, his wife and two children per week?—I have entered it in this paper:

OUTLAY for One Week for One Man, his Wife and Two of a Family.

	s.	*d.*
10 stone of coals, at 1 ½ *d.* per stone	1	3
Loom-rent	1	–
[This statement does not include the rent of the house, it is only the rent or cost for the wear and tear.]		
¾ stone of oatmeal	1	3
1 lb. candles for the shop	–	6
½ lb. candles for the house	–	3
3 stone of potatoes	–	7 ½
Sour milk, eight quarts	–	4
Eight herrings	–	4
½ oz. tea and ½ lb. sugar	–	5 ½
Bread	–	4
½ lb. soap	–	2 ½
	6	5 ½

House-rent rates as follows:

Two-loom shop, with the necessary accommodations, from 5 *l.* to 5 *l.* 10 *s.* per annum.

1131. Is that in the town or the country?—There is no difference in weavers' shops of any consequence in the vicinity of Belfast.

1132. What is a single-loom shop?—There are very few of them; they are generally made for two looms at least. Four-loom shop, with the same accommodations, from 7 *l.* to 7 *l.* 10 *s.* per annum.

1133. What does that come to per week, the rent; take the 5 *l.* 10 *s.*?—I have not calculated that.

1134. In the country, is there any garden or potato ground attached to the house?—In the country it might be so, and often is, and the rents are cheaper; but this is immediately in the vicinity of Belfast.

1135. In the country the rents are cheaper?—Yes, I believe they are.

1136. And they have frequently a potato ground?—In some cases, others not. I have been making inquiries on that point, and I find not generally so. I have got, "Income per week, two pieces of a 16^{00} $\frac{5}{4}$ loom, 6 *s.*; winding ditto, 8 *d.*; total income, 6 *s.* 8 *d.*" There is no allowance made for twisting, nor for any deduction of work by the employer. This is the very highest price paid at Belfast for that fabric.

1137. The Committee are not talking about the fabric, but the expenses that come against the working of the fabric; the expenses that come against the 6 *s.* 6 *d.* received by a person for working this fabric?—I went over all that but the house-rent.

1138. Very well, what does it come to altogether?—It comes to 6 *s.* 5 ½ *d.*

1139. What, the expenses?—Yes; for the total expenditure.

1140. What, in one week?—Yes.

1141. You have not added the rent?—No. To put the Committee in full possession of the case, where I have entered 1 *s.* for the loom-rent here, it includes the stand of the loom, and the necessary tackling connected with it; for instance, if a loom is going to be hired, that is, a place for the loom to be set in, without including any materials, it is generally from 10 *s.* to 20 *s.* per annum, the ground-rent of the loom.

1142. You would have to put down your own loom?—Yes.

1143. Is

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1143. Is not that charged in the house; you pay so much, 5 *l.* 10 *s.* a year for the house, for a two-loom house; therefore you cannot charge it twice over?—I am explaining to the Committee how it cannot be charged twice over.

1144. Well then, it is 6 *s.* 5 ½ *d.*?—Yes.

1145. Then you conceive 6 *s.* 5 ½ *d.* is the lowest rate at which a weaver can support a family consisting of himself and wife and two children?—I believe it is; for there are no luxuries in that, and it is a faithful state of the market.

1146. Then if it costs a person 6 *s.* 5 ½ *d.* to live at the lowest rate of existence, how do those persons get on who merely receive 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a week?—They live just proportionate to that.

1147. Are they obliged to deny themselves the necessaries of life?—Certainly, to a certain extent.

1148. But do not the wife and the children earn something?—In some cases they do; only for those coarser fabrics there is nothing paid for the winding of it. And there is another system carried on to a certain extent in Belfast, that some of the manufacturers pay for their work by the piece, others pay for it by the ell; and when it is paid by the piece, winding and all is included in so much per piece.

1149. Do you think that what the wife and children earn is equivalent to the winding?—When the weaver has any family, as soon as he can possibly get them to do anything he is necessitated to put them to it.

1150. How much do you think on an average the wife and children earn for the weaver, in addition to his own 6 *s.* 6 *d.*?—It a great deal depends on circumstances. If that individual be possessed of a four-loom shop, we will say his wife might perhaps wind for two or three of the looms, and average each at 8 *d.* a week for the winding, that would be 2 *s.* income.

1151. Then it is only the higher class of workmen, earning 6 *s.* 6 *d.* a week, who can afford to keep a four-loom house?—Where a house can be got, furnished properly with looms, instead of the individual who possesses it losing by it, he generally gains. If he has no family of his own to put on the looms, he can get journeymen; each of these journeymen, you will see by this statement, pay him for the loom and lodging 2 *s.* a week, and this helps his income together with the winding.

1152. Do you think that the weaver earning the lowest rate of wages, 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a week, has the means, in consequence of these different circumstances you are now stating, of taking in the journeymen as lodgers, and his wife winding, and the children doing some work; do you think he is enabled to make up altogether for his family as much as will produce for him the 6 *s.* 5 ½ *d.*, which you conceive to be the lowest rate at which they can live?—I think he is, in those cases where the individual has kept his looms going, and kept journeymen; but it is not generally the case.

1153. Then you think the greatest number of the weavers in your district are compelled to live at a less rate of expenditure than 6 *s.* 5 ½ *d.*?—Indeed, I would say that is as much, under the same circumstances, as any of them have.

1154. But taking the whole body of weavers, what should you say is the fair average representation of the state of the great body of weavers in Belfast per week?—I have endeavoured to put the Committee in possession of that.

1155. But the family altogether?—It just depends again on the circumstances that that family is under.

1156. Do you think on the average that each family earns, and when I say the family, I mean the wife and children as well as the weaver; do you think on the average they earn 5 *s.* a week, the lowest class?—It depends greatly on the number of the family employed, if there were any given number of family. Now for instance, I know several families that were formerly in very low circumstances, and having a family brought forward, that they are able to occupy three or four looms within themselves, they are, comparatively speaking, comfortable; and taking or keeping in view circumstances of this kind, I do not see how I could classify them under any particular average, any further than what I have done.

1157. Then you think the majority of weavers is in a great state of want and destitution in your district?—Yes, I think they are to a certain extent.

1158. Do they dress as well as they used to do?—No, they have not the means.

1159. Do they attend divine service as much as they used to do?—Very few of them do.

1160. Why

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1160. Why do you think they attend divine service less than they used to do?—Because they are not prepared to go out. It is a kind of feeling within a man's mind in regard of going to a place of worship, stronger than if he were going to any place of amusement, that he would like to go decent to it.

1161. And you think very few go now, in consequence of not being able to dress themselves decently?—That is just the cause, I think.

1162. You did not state among the expenses that come against the weaver, the purchase of his loom; the loom is his own property, is it not?—It just depends on whether he occupies his own loom, or whether he is a journeyman; the master generally provides a journeyman his loom and tackle or machinery.

1163. Oh! then the master provides the loom?—Yes, I mean the individual who has the house.

1164. Then the master generally furnishes the loom, does he?—What I mean by the master, is the weaver who rents the house. If it be a two-loom shop, he generally uses his exertion to provide two looms to put into it.

1165. The weaver himself does?—Yes.

1166. Then a weaver of the higher class occasionally provides looms for weavers of the lower class?—No, not as I understand it. What I was going to state was this: that an individual I will suppose held or rented a four-loom shop, he used his endeavour to provide four looms to put into this shop, to fill it and set it into working order; well, if he had not a family to fill these looms, he would let them to journeymen.

1167. But what does his loom cost him?—Is it the purchase of the loom?

1168. Yes.—The first cost?

1169. Yes.—I suppose it would cost somewhere between 25 *s.* and 35 *s.* I could not speak altogether to facts; it is a thing that I have not often troubled myself about.

1170. But he has to recover back the original price of the loom out of the wages that he receives?—Yes, it is the same as any other article.

1171. Who sent you up here?—I was summoned.

1172. Who chose you to come up?—The weavers generally.

1173. Was there a meeting?—Yes.

1174. And you were selected by that meeting to appear here?—Yes.

1175. What is the average rate of pay of a day-labourer in Belfast, a man who has out-door work; not a weaver nor a man who has anything to do with weaving, but just a common out-door labourer?—Where labourers are employed they get 1 *s.* a day.

1176. Have they, generally speaking, 1 *s.* a day in your neighbourhood?—Yes.

1177. In the immediate neighbourhood?—Yes.

1178. Do you know, in any district 10 or 12 miles from Belfast, what the rate of wages is?—No, I could not speak particularly to that.

1179. There either is or was a great number of linen weavers in and about Belfast?—There are very few in the immediate vicinity of it at present.

1180. Do you think they have decreased in your knowledge, or have come to weaving cotton; that they have changed their work, in fact?—It just depends on this, whether the one trade be brisker than the other: a number of them can almost instantly change from the one to the closer fabrics of the other, and when the linen trade becomes flat, or a glut or any other cause occurs, a number of them turn to the other if they can get employment at it; and when there is any encouragement on the other side they generally turn to it.

1181. Can you tell whether upon an average there are fewer or a greater number of weavers employed in the linen trade just now than there were three years ago?—I cannot say, I have no connexion nor acquaintance whatever with that trade.

1182. But there is a great body of hand-loom weavers?—Spread over the country, not the immediate vicinity of Belfast. I know only two linen weavers round all Belfast, or immediately in the vicinity of it.

1183. Now you said there had been a great deal of embezzlement in the article of yarn sent from Glasgow to Belfast to weave?—No, that was not altogether the meaning of the answer; I said it was sent or came over to be sold. I did not mean to be understood to make any allusion to the Scotch agents coming to Belfast.

1184. Do you suppose it came over there to be sold or to be wove in Belfast?—It came to be sold, I think.

1185. And was it wove in or about Belfast?—Yes, probably it was.

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1186. Now did a weaver get less for working up this embezzled yarn, than what he would get for working up good yarn?—The way that that generally comes is this: individuals purchase warps for themselves, they sell it in what is called the cash market, and the cheaper that they can purchase this article it gives them the greater remuneration.

1187. Are they what you call *corks* that buy that yarn?—Yes, or small capitalists.

1188. Have the hand-loom weavers in your district, or did the meeting which appointed you empower you to submit to the Committee any remedy for the evils of which they complain?—Yes, I have it here:

PLAN of a BOARD OF TRADE for the Hand-loom Weavers employed in the Cotton Trade in *Ireland.*

That there shall be one supreme Board of Trade for Ireland, and established in Belfast, to consist of three competent persons, two of which shall form a quorum, but to have full powers to settle all disputes that may arise or come before them.

That there shall be one subordinate board, whose duty it shall be to superintend and regulate the prices of workmanship in all branches of the cotton trade performed by hand-loom weavers in Ireland; and this board to be separate from, and independent of any of the boards of England or Scotland.

That the board shall consist of a certain number of manufacturers and weavers, who shall sit once a quarter, or at stated periods, and shall be empowered to regulate the rates of workmanship of each respective fabric, so that as far as possible it shall be consistent with the mutual benefit of master and workman, and the prosperity of the trade at large.

That the manufacturers and weavers shall respectively appoint from their own bodies the necessary number to constitute a board, and who shall be taken from the different districts of the country in proportion to the quantity of manufactures carried on therein.

That every question decided by this board which shall have the unanimous consent of a full meeting, shall be final.

That in the event of the votes being equally divided, the case shall be submitted to the consideration of the supreme board, whose decision as umpire shall be final.

That this board, in settling the price of workmanship, shall be guided as nearly as possible by the data of what the manufacturers of principle and respectability could reasonably afford to pay without bringing the trade into jeopardy by the competition of foreign nations.

That the prices of workmanship thus set, shall not be a fixed rate, which every manufacturer shall be obliged to pay and no more, but a minimum under which they shall not be permitted to come, leaving at all times any individual at liberty to rise as much above it as is suitable to his interest when forwarding an order, or when he wishes to increase his trade.

That the regulations of this board shall be binding till next sitting, and to be enforced by suitable penalties imposed on all open transgressors, and those who evade the law.

1189. You are empowered by the meeting to give in that as what they conceive to be the best plan?—Yes.

1190. Do you conceive that the manufacturers would agree to those terms?—I think there are some manufacturers who would not be very willing to agree to it, and I think there are others who would. I spoke with some myself who seemed to desire such a thing as that.

1191. Is it the impression in Belfast that the larger or the smaller proportion of the manufacturers would agree to a plan of that kind?—I could not altogether say the proportion, but I would believe, as far as I have understood, that those who are in opposition to it are influenced by circumstances; that I think is, they would be afraid that it would have too direct a control over themselves.

1192. You have spoken of a limit in that plan, which is, that it should not disable the manufacturer from selling in the foreign market?—Yes, not bringing the trade into jeopardy.

1193. Now, does your trade depend on the foreign or the home market most?—I should think our trade depends greatly on the home market. There are cases I believe where the Belfast trade is somewhat varied, but to what extent, having no direct opportunity of knowing the facts, I could not state to the Committee.

1194. Now, generally speaking, do the weavers attach more value to the home market or to the foreign market?—I could not say.

1195. You do not know the general impression?—No, I never heard it talked very much about. Only, to state my own opinion on it, I would prefer the home market to the foreign; I think it is the safest; and if the means were enlarged for purchasing through Ireland, or even through individuals who are immediately

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diately connected with the cotton trade, I think it would open an extensive market, if they were enabled to purchase their own productions.

1196. Are the farmers in your district well off?—I think they are not so well off as they have been.

1197. Do you think if the farmer and farmer's labourer were better off, they would be enabled to increase the home market?—Certainly, they would purchase more, I think.

1198. Is it a general feeling among the weavers that they wish to relieve the distress existing among the farmers?—It is not generally held that the distress is to that great extent among farmers as it is among our class; for if the provision be low in price, there has these two years been a superabundant supply.

1199. Do the weavers conceive the Corn Laws operate against their interest?—No, I do not think the Corn Laws are very injurious under existing circumstances; for it would be a matter of small moment to us, no matter how cheap we could get our provision, if our wages were brought to the same level.

1200. Is there an opinion among the weavers if corn were to be reduced still lower, that the masters would reduce their wages still lower?—Yes, we have woful experience of that.

1201. Have you read the details of the measure proposed by Mr. Fielden?—I have just slightly sketched over it.

1202. Had the persons attending the meeting the opportunity of seeing that measure?—No, I believe not; I did not hear it spoke of.

1203. Will you give your own opinion of it as far as you have been able to appreciate it?—

1204. You say you would have your supreme board of trade for all Ireland, as a board of trade quite independent of any other board of trade in England or in Scotland?—Yes.

1205. Now as there are about one-fourth of the whole of your weavers employed by Glasgow houses, would you submit to the Glasgow terms, or would you make the Glasgow manufacturers submit to your terms; because you will observe they may have a board of trade in Glasgow, and would of course if the thing were established; they would have a board of trade in Glasgow for the Glasgow district, and you have another for Belfast. Now what the Committee want to know is, whether you consider yourself as in the Glasgow district because you work there, or whether you consider yourself in the Belfast district because you live there, though you do not get any employment from it?—We consider ourselves in the Belfast district, and we would have full powers in the regulation of our own price. It is self-evident to us, if the prices in Ireland and Glasgow were equalized, if they were put upon one footing——

1206. That is another thing altogether; your board of trade do not contemplate that, because you say it is to be an independent board of trade?—I am only endeavouring to point out to the Committee the evils from having them connected. Were the prices to be equalized and the three boards connected, it would have a direct tendency to drive the cotton trade out of Ireland altogether, for we are not able to compete under the same circumstances with either England or Scotland; we have neither the capital nor the machinery, nor the enterprizing persevering ingenuity of those possessed of capital.

1207. But you will recollect that the Glasgow manufacturer who employs you sends his capital to Ireland?—It is this that we mean to encourage. It is capital to come to the country; and this we would give every protection and encouragement to.

1208. Then you are advocating a lower rate of wages in Scotland?—Exactly so; to induce them to extend it.

1209. In fact, it is your opinion that it would be an advantage to the Glasgow manufacturer to employ you at the Belfast price, instead of getting their yarn wove at the Glasgow list of prices?—I am not aware that there is much difference between the two scales.

1210. You mean to say if there be a lower rate of wages in Ireland than Scotland or England, the capitalists may be induced to bring their capital to Ireland, and so employ more weavers than would otherwise be employed in Ireland?—Yes.

1211. And if the wages were to be so high in Ireland as in Scotland and England, capital would remain in Scotland and England instead of coming to Ireland, and the weavers would be the worse of?—Yes; and, on the other hand, it would have the effect of reducing our Irish manufacturers, for they could not for one instant, I might almost say, compete with either of the other two countries.

1212. Have you known the principle on which a proposal of a board of trade is based,

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based, namely, a compact between the manufacturers and the operatives to prevent the unlimited reduction of the price of labour, to have been acted upon to any extent in Ireland, and what was the result?—It has been acted upon to a certain extent. The documents that I gave in to the Committee would prove the compact; but for want of a compulsory law enactment to cause this to be binding, it was broke by some individual just as soon as his interests served him to break through the compact.

1213. Then you think if those individuals had not broken in upon the compact, that compact would have continued both to the satisfaction of the masters and weavers?—Certainly.

1214. Which is the briskest at this time, the linen or the cotton trade?—I can speak to very few facts concerning the linen trade.

1215. To the best of your knowledge were any witnesses called from the Belfast district last year for the hand-loom weavers?—No, there were none called.

1216. Were there any linen weavers?—I do not know.

Lunæ, 6° die Aprilis, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

John Boyd, called in; and further Examined.

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1217. HAVE you anything to add to the evidence you gave the other day with respect to Mr. Fielden's Bill?—Personally speaking, I conceive that the principle of it is somewhat similar to that which we sought for; the only difference is, that in the one case the thing is comeatable more easily. I beg leave to submit to the Committee that I feel very awkwardly situated. I have no person to communicate with, and I am certain the weavers of Belfast know little or nothing of the provisions of this Bill. Through a long series of privation and suffering, the energy of mind they were formerly possessed of is broken; they see nothing before them but the withering prospect of hopeless destitution and suffering, and under existing circumstances, should the provision increase in price, it would be out of human knowledge to anticipate the results: I therefore could not feel justified in speaking the opinion of the trade at large; I can only with propriety give my opinion.

1218. You think Mr. Fielden's Bill more practicable than the system at present adopted?—Yes; only whether it would apply to the local circumstances of Ireland is a different thing. They have a peculiar mode of sleying their work there.

1219. Will you describe what you mean by that?—I have a scale here that would throw some light upon it (*the same was handed in, and is as follows*):

"There is one objection to the board of trade with some of our employers that I should wish to obviate, and the objection is this: that it would confine every manufacturer to the same plan of sleying and wefting the same fabric, and therefore expose their system to their neighbour. The plan that I would recommend is this. To put the Committee into full possession I must go into detail; take, for instance, an 18^{00}_{8} stout jaconet, with six shots over square, and 11° for warp; this must be somewhere about 125 shots to the inch; and, in the general acceptation of the term, this constitutes jaconet muslin. I mean to take this fabric as a criterion or standard for fixing the price for the time being; and the following scale will embrace the different fabrics wrought through the same reed, and thus constitute a basis for all the reeds, harness or figured work excepted.

DENOMINATION.	REED.	No. of Yarn.	SHOT.	PER ELL.
				d.
Causey	18^{00}	100	22	$3\frac{3}{4}$
Jaconet	18^{00}	110	24	4
Superior jaconet	18^{00}	120	26	$4\frac{1}{4}$
Medium	18^{00}	125	21	4
Medium	18^{00}	135	22	$4\frac{1}{4}$
Superior medium	18^{00}	145	23	$4\frac{1}{2}$
Light jaconet	18^{00}	135	20	4
Light jaconet	18^{00}	145	21	$4\frac{1}{4}$
Superior light jaconet	18^{00}	160	21	$4\frac{1}{2}$
Lawn	18^{00}	170	18	$4\frac{3}{4}$
Lawn	18^{00}	180	18	5
Superior Lawn	18^{00}	190	20	$5\frac{1}{2}$

This

This scale only supposes the price; but as far as I can learn, the rate of sleying and wefting is correct, for I have wrought them all myself.

1220. Have you anything more to add?—I neglected on the last examination to state to the Committee the reason why I could not so clearly come to the criterion prices. I have here two tickets of the same reed, and for the sake of brevity I will show the difference in the price for nearly the same fabric, taking the same length of each.

1221. Do you imagine there will be any difficulty in ascertaining the rate at which any of those fabrics are wove?—No, there can be no difficulty in ascertaining the reed; only the different fabrics are so numerous that are woven through the one reed, that there are different shades even in the same fabric.

1222. Are those paid at very greatly different rates?—Yes, there is a difference in them.

1223. Do you think that you could bring them all together, and form a sort of criterion out of a certain number, in order to ascertain the truth of what the rate ought to be that should be fixed upon it, the rate of wages throughout every district?—I was endeavouring to point that out and to solve that difficulty; this statement will show the difference in the price, taking the same length of each:—

	£.	s.	d.
96 ells, 14^{00} $\frac{9}{8}$ 2 *s.* per piece; (this includes winding and all) - - -	1	–	–
96 ells, 14^{00} $\frac{9}{8}$ 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* per ell - - - - - - - - - -	1	2	–
Winding for same - - - - - - - - - - -	–	2	6
£.	1	4	6

Showing a difference on weaving and winding of the same larth of 4 *s.* 6 *d.*

1224. Are these wove by the same man, and through the same loom?—No, they are out of different offices. The difference is between the price that one manufacturer pays and the other.

1225. For the same article?—Yes.

1226. But these manufacturers are manufacturers of a different species of fabrics?—There is very little change or difference between the two fabrics.

1227. Does one manufacturer employ a certain number of men in one kind of fabric, and a certain number in another?—Yes, there are many different fabrics made by individual manufacturers at Belfast.

1228. The Committee understood you to say you thought Mr. Fielden's plan more technical than the boards of trade that you yourself sought?—Yes, speaking for myself.

1229. If an Act were founded upon it to make it compulsory, do you think it could be easily evaded?—There might be evasions made in it.

1230. Will you describe how?—There is one plan or one system that might be acted upon; suppose work, after the criterion was fixed, to grow scarce, the manufacturer might cause the weaver to give him in so much, to get the work, and through that evade the law.

1231. You mean, take a premium for the work?—Yes.

1232. But that may be done at present?—Yes, it can be; there is no law to prohibit it now.

1233. Do you think the power given by that Bill for settling disputes by arbitration would be sufficient?—I do think it would answer the purpose very well, for it is somewhat similar to the existing law of arbitration, only it brings in more parties to arbitrate.

1234. What system of arbitration would you prefer, if a matter were to be arbitrated between a master and a weaver; what class of people would you in your judgment think most fit to be the arbitrators?—I should think those individuals who perfectly understood the nature of the task they were going upon, would be the most fit persons.

1235. From what class ought they to be chosen, to satisfy the weavers, for instance?—I have known cases where weavers were employed both for the manufacturer and the weaver, and I have known other cases where the manufacturer employed one of his own class, and the weaver employed one of his, and I should think it only just that each of the parties should have the power of appointing one of their own class.

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1236. Then your notion is not to have a permanent board that should sit and conciliate cases, but that in every case there should be an arbitrator chosen; is that your notion?—Yes.

1237. Do you think that the tendency of fixing a minimum rate of wages would be, that many masters would erect loom factories, so as to bring the weavers under one roof and under one establishment, and making them work so many hours a day, and at such rates as they agreed on?—I am not aware that that would exist in Ireland.

1238. Would not such a system hinder the peculations of yarn that you talked of before?—It would, certainly.

1239. Supposing work increased very much, and that in consequence of the increase of work there should be a natural rise of wages, and the rate was fixed, do not you think masters would use that rate against the men, and say we cannot pay you higher wages because you have consented to this average rate?—Speaking from experience, manufacturers in general are not willing to advance.

1240. Would not that be an additional reason for their not advancing if they could establish the lowest rate or an average rate; supposing instead of fixing $3\frac{1}{8}$ *d.* per ell, which is now paid for certain goods, they fixed 4 *d.*, and there was a demand in the market, would not the masters have more power of keeping down the wages than the weavers would have of causing them to rise?—If I understand the question properly, if the minimum scale were fixed, he would not be possessed of so much power then, certainly, as he is now.

1241. The weaver would not have the same power, if a minimum scale were fixed, of forcing an advance when there should be a demand for labour as he has now?—No, but the thing would certainly work itself out.

Mr. *Alexander Moncrieffe,* called in; and Examined.

Mr. *A. Moncrieffe.*

1242. IN what line of business are you?—Muslin manufacturer.

1243. In what neighbourhood?—Belfast.

1244. How long have you been connected with the cotton trade?—Twenty-seven years, I think, or thereabouts.

1245. During that period has the trade increased to a considerable extent in the district to which you belong?—I think it has increased considerably during that time.

1246. How many persons do you conceive are employed in hand-loom weaving in Belfast and the vicinity?—I took a note here from the best sources of information to which I could have access, and I have stated the weavers in Belfast and its vicinity, Newtownards, Bangor, Grey Abbey, Donaghadee, &c., at 5,000; Lisburn, Maze, and district round about, 5,000; calico weavers at Antrim, Randalstown, Carrickfergus, and scattered through the counties of Derry and Armagh, 5,000, making altogether about 15,000. I cannot pretend to be accurate, because I do not think there is any way of ascertaining the thing accurately, but that is as near as I could ascertain.

1247. In the distance of how many miles round Belfast?—About 20 miles. In Belfast and the towns and districts before mentioned, about 5,000, and the other 10,000 in a circle of 30 or 40 miles.

1248. Forty miles diameter?—Twenty one way, and 20 or perhaps 30 another.

1249. On what data have you founded that opinion that there are 15,000?—Merely from supposition, and from certain statements that have been made to me, and not from any positively authentic data, because I am not aware that there is a registry of numbers in any district kept.

1250. How many looms are there in the same district?—I should think about 15,000 looms; I ought, perhaps, to have mentioned, that it applies more to *looms* than to weavers.

1251. How many of these are employed by Scotch houses?—From the best sources of information to which I have had access, I learn that about 2,500 are employed by them, and about 800 by English branches.

1252. That is, manufacturers carrying on business in England and Scotland who put out weaving?—Yes; for instance, Messrs. James Hutchinson & Co., of Glasgow. I have a document from their manager, by which it appears they have 850 weavers employed, and I have the average sums for eight weeks that they have paid to those 850 weavers; 216 *l.* one week, 245 *l.* another, 212 *l.* another, 243 *l.* another, 205 *l.* another, 258 *l.* another, 200 *l.* another, 204 *l.* another.

1253. Are those pounds sterling?—Pounds sterling, paid to those weavers employed, for eight weeks.

1254. How many weavers had you in your own employ last January?—At that time we had about 370, but I think I may state the number at 350.

1255. What do you conceive to be the average earnings of a hand-loom weaver in constant employment, in your neighbourhood?—It is extremely difficult precisely to answer that question, because there are some weavers more indolent than they ought to be, and some who do not weave regularly; and such being the case, I think the question should be, "What could a weaver earn?"

1256. Well, what can a weaver earn; a fairly industrious man, working 12 hours a-day?—That depends on the fabric he is weaving, there being coarser and finer fabrics.

1257. Take an average between the two, or the highest and the lowest?—I should suppose that perhaps one of the best kind of weavers weaving the finest fabric, might earn from 7*s.* to 8*s.* per week. There are cases where he could earn 10*s.* a-week, but that would not be a fair criterion to judge of what a man could earn through the year.

1258. Do you mean there are cases where a man could do it by over-working himself, or by working at particular fabrics?—I think the weaver at the finer fabric could perhaps earn 10*s.* a week.

1259. How many persons are there engaged in your particular line in the finest fabric?—There might not, perhaps, be more than about one-fourth part of the weavers at the finer fabrics; I mean one-fourth part of the muslin weavers, not, of course, including the calico ones.

1260. Is 10*s.* the maximum of his earnings, or is that what a man might earn by extraordinary exertion?—I do not think it would be a fair criterion of judging, to take what a man by an extraordinary exertion might earn.

1261. How many weavers do you think do earn 10*s.* a week?—If I were to take an average view of the question, perhaps there might not be any that would earn that sum; some individuals might do so, but this of course could not fairly be taken as an average of the whole.

1262. Of the 15,000 looms, how many do you think there are earn 7*s.* or 8*s.* a week?—I cannot precisely state, as out of the 15,000 weavers there may 5,000 of them work at calico, and they could not perhaps earn more than 3*s.* or 3*s.* 6*d.* a week. A considerable portion of these reside in the country, and having patches of land, of course, at particular seasons of the year, do not constantly employ themselves at the loom.

1263. Supposing they were fully employed at the rate of wages paid, 12 hours a day, what could they earn?—Not more than 3*s.* to 4*s.*

1264. How many of the parties are there who could only receive, if they worked a fair day's work, 3*s.* or 4*s.* a-week, and how many are there who might receive 7*s.* or 8*s.*?—I was talking to a very extensive manufacturer in Belfast before I left home, with a view to ascertain what the general number of weavers may earn per week, and I do not think, on an average of the year, working at the best description of general work, they earn more than 7*s.* per week.

1265. Then how many are there that would earn only 3*s.* or 4*s.*?—There might be one-half of them muslin weavers, who could not earn more than 4*s.* or 5*s.*, as it is only the best weavers that can earn 7*s.* There is a description of work called harness shawls, and the weavers being paid 8*d.* per ell for it, can earn more than at the other descriptions; it however requires 4*l.* or 5*l.* to procure the mounting for the loom, and the man who is capable of working this fabric, having a better branch of the trade than the others, can of course earn more at that branch than can be done at the plain one. I should, therefore, suppose a harness weaver might earn from 12*s.* to 15*s.* a week.

1266–7. How many are there employed in harness work?—The harness weavers are now chiefly employed by one of the Scotch branches, at a kind of work called zebras, a rather finer description of harness, which the Scotch export to distant countries.

1268. The harness weavers are a small proportion of the whole, are they?—I do not think there are more than 400 or 500 of them in the vicinity of Belfast, and they generally do not extend beyond the vicinity of that town.

1269. Then those who get the minimum rate of wages are those who come precisely in contact with power-loom weaving?—The 3*s.* or 4*s.* class of weavers; I think

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I think that fabric of weaving will in some time be altogether superseded by the power-looms.

1270. You think it is the plain work with which the power-loom immediately comes into competition?—I do not think the power-looms could work harness or fine work generally.

1271. Could they work the work that the men earning 7*s.* a week work?—I think it will be a long time before they can get power-looms to such perfection that they could work those fabrics in quantities; they might of course make a trial, but they could not, I think, produce them in such quantities as would be necessary to supply the demand of the market.

1272. When did the power-looms first begin to come into competition with plain work?—Perhaps I may just state to the Committee that there are only 584 power-looms in Belfast altogether.

1273. For cotton?—Yes, 584.

1274. At the present time?—That is all that I am aware of being in Ireland at present.

1275. When did they begin first to come into competition?—I do not think in Ireland more than perhaps eight or ten years ago, and 200 of those, or perhaps one-half of that number, not more than five or six years ago.

1276. When did the wages of the plain weaver begin to decline so much?—Why, I think it was about the year 1814 or 1815 that they first began to decline very much; the power-looms had not then come into such competition with them, but the duties that were on Irish goods at that period began to be reduced, and that had a considerable influence in the reduction of the wages.

1277. What do you imagine would have been the earnings of the same individuals at the time you first became connected with the trade, namely, 27 years ago?—I should think a man at that time might earn about 25*s.* a week; I should suppose any weaver might earn 15*s.*, and I think some weavers might have earned 30*s.*

1278. That would be about what year?—From 1805 to 1813, or 1814, I should think that those sums might have been earned.

1279. The same men that now earn 3*s.* or 4*s.* could then have earned 15*s.*?—No; the same man who can now earn 7*s.* 6*d.*

1280. And what could the plain weaver earn, who only now earns 3*s.* or 4*s.*?—I should suppose at that time he might have earned perhaps 10*s.* or 11*s.*; I should think about that, or perhaps 12*s.*

1281. Do you imagine that the change of duties which took place, to which you have alluded, was the main cause of the reduction of wages, in the one case from 11*s.* to 3*s.* or 4*s.*, and in the other case from 15*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.*?—Perhaps in a certain sense they might have had an influence; but I rather think, taking the cotton trade generally, that the abolition of the duties was advantageous. I will give one instance: I recollect being connected with a house, and they frequently, from want of sales, accumulated an immense stock of calicoes, perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 pieces, before the time the duties were taken off; and when those duties were in part taken off, that is, when they were reduced to 10 or 15 per cent. on the value, they would pay that duty and send them over to England, and thus got rid of their stock.

1282. But if it were an advantage to the manufacturer, would not that advantage have re-acted on the condition of the weaver?—The advantage I mean is, that there was more cloth required, and of course more made.

1283. If there were a greater demand, would not that demand have rather a tendency to raise the wages of the weaver?—About 15 years ago, when the very high duty was on cloth from Ireland, the manufacturer generally rested one year out of three; for two years he was tolerably actively employed, and the third he did next to nothing.

1284. Before the change of duties took place?—Before the change of duties took place.

1285. If there was one year out of three which the weaver was not employed, surely that would have been rather against the interest of the weaver?—He would have made more in the two years then than what he could make perhaps in three now; but being idle about a third of his time, made his condition of course not much better on the average. There were, however, many workmen at that period who were not kept idle, and those, of course, at that high rate of wages were in extremely comfortable circumstances.

1286. What

1286. What was the number of looms existing in the same district where there are now 15,000, at the period of the high wages which you speak of?—I should think that probably there were perhaps a third less than at present; about 10,000 I suppose altogether.

1287. Was this reduction in the wages gradual?—It was rather gradual; although I think there was a very great reduction took place from 1814 to 1817.

1288. To what other causes besides those you have named do you attribute a gradual decline in the price of labour?—On coarse goods the introduction of power-looms was certainly calculated to reduce the wages very much. To give you an instance of how that operates, I applied to Messrs. Martins & Co. of Killeleigh, who have about 200 power-looms employed there, and I think 1,000 looms employed in the country; the note is this: "Martins & Co, of Killeleigh, employ 1,500 calico weavers, who reside in the counties of Derry, Armagh and Antrim." They have 200 power-looms employed in their mill at Killeleigh, and those 200 power-looms they told me produce as much as the 1,500 looms scattered through the country.

1289. How long have these weavers been receiving 3*s.* or 4*s.* a week?—I should suppose perhaps for these last seven or eight years; but it is necessary again perhaps just to state, that there are very few men that weave calicoes, it is chiefly either boys, girls or women. It is the lowest class of work, and it is of course the lowest grade of the operatives who work at it. A weaver, however, might have four looms in his shop, weave fine fabrics himself, and might have three or four employed at that coarse work, either his own or other's children.

1290. Then the wages of these plain weavers are as much now as they were seven or eight years ago, when first power-looms came into competition?—Wages are at present about 15 per cent. higher than they were two years since.

1291. To what do you attribute that?—To a greater demand for goods, and to a consequent competition to procure the workmen; formerly the weavers had great difficulty in getting work, latterly they have been courted to take it, and the consequence of this competition has been a rise of wages.

1292. A power-loom will produce 7½ times more than a hand-loom?—Not if the hand-loom weaver would work as regularly and constantly as the power one must do; but not being in that branch of the trade, I of course cannot give any positive opinion as to the precise ratio of difference.

1293. Children can weave these coarse calicoes, and they can get 3*s.* or 4*s.* a week by weaving them?—Yes.

1294. And it is children's work?—Yes.

1295. You do not consider that it is men's work?—I do not.

1296. Could those children get 15*s.* a week formerly?—Those children I think might have earned 10*s.* formerly. I do not mean by children mere infants, but boys from 10 to 15 years of age, and they only learning the trade.

1297. Do you happen to be acquainted with any weavers in the linen trade?—I am not acquainted with the linen trade, although I can give the Committee an idea of the extent now of flax-spinning.

1298. Do you happen to know the wages of the weavers, of any plain weaver of linen?—There is a great difference between the weaving of linen and the weaving of cotton, as, generally speaking, the weavers have patches of land in different parts of the country, and purchase the yarn and sell their own webs in the market: that is not done to anything like an equal extent in the muslin or the calico trade.

1299. But comparing the plain weavers in the linen and the cotton trade, which bears the highest rate of wages?—I should suppose, under some circumstances, the linen weavers could earn more than the cotton ones; but I cannot speak from any thing within my own experience, it is therefore only mere matter of opinion.

1300. The condition of both classes, as existing in Belfast, would naturally come under your observation?—There are no linen weavers in Belfast.

1301. Will you state any other cause you know which has caused this reduction in the price of labour?—The general cause is want of demand for the goods.

1302. A reduction of demand from what source?—For a long time, in consequence of the duties, the Irish could not export their muslins to England.

1303. What was the duty?—A very large one at one time; I think it was 10*d.* a yard on certain kinds of muslins.

1304. But this decreased demand for their labour has taken place since the duties have become less?—I think since the duties were taken off there has been an increase.

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1305. When were the duties taken off?—In 1821.

1306. But since 1821, according to your statement, the wages of the weavers have been much worse than they were before?—Why in 1826 the trade in Belfast was so extremely bad, that I recollect the weavers were nearly all idle; in consequence of which, a public subscription, amounting, I think, to 5,000*l.* was raised for them. A part of that sum was appropriated to the purchase of stones, and they had to be employed at breaking them, at, I think, 10*d.* or 1*s.* per day. Of course, such being the state of the cotton trade, wages fell to such a ruinously low rate, as may be fairly denominated the starvation point.

1307. How were they for three years preceding 1826?—The wages between these years perhaps fluctuated 10 to 15 per cent.; but I think not much more than that.

1308. Do you conceive that one of the causes has been increased competition?—Until the Scotch and English manufacturers found it their interest, owing to the wages being less in Ireland than in Scotland and England, to come over to establish branches, the weavers were not generally in constant employment, as the manufacturers had not such consumption for goods as enabled them to employ all the looms constantly.

1309. Do you attribute any part of the reduction to the increased competition?—There has not, I think, been much reduction since the Scotch agency branches were established in Belfast.

1310. Can you at all explain what the weavers mean by the increase in the home competition, which they think reduces their wages?—I should think no home competition would cause a reduction in their wages if there exist a demand for goods; any reduction on any particular fabric must arise from a demand not existing for that fabric. A man with a very small capital might be induced to offer work at a lower rate than a man with a greater one and a more extensive trade; but I think that would not materially operate on the best class of weavers.

1311. Should you infer from that the demand was greater during the time they received better wages than it is now?—Why, previous to the taking off the duty, of course the wages were much higher than since that time, because no goods could come into Ireland without paying that high duty, and as long as they could sell the fabrics they manufactured, they could get a better price for them; another reason why the wages were higher was, that rents and provisions were a great deal higher, and, of course, there was a balancing of the matter between the price of provision and rent and wages. There was a greater similarity then than what there is now to compare that with.

1312. Do you suppose, if those duties were to be re-imposed, the wages of weavers would rise up as high as they were before?—I do not.

1313. Then there must be some other cause besides taking off the duties that caused it?—For instance, we must, to a certain extent, regulate our wages by the wages paid in Scotland and England, and by the prices of power-loom goods. Those several causes must always operate upon the scale of wages.

1314. Taking the provisions into consideration, do you think the condition of the weavers generally is as good now as it was when provisions were higher?—I do not by any means.

1315. You think they are better off under higher prices than lower?—Yes, I think they were a great deal better off then than they are now; because I recollect at that period weavers earned a great deal, and were generally very respectable men, and conducted themselves very well. A man who did not so conduct himself was scouted from the society of respectable weavers; but now, in consequence of the reduction of wages and other causes, a number of them are not so well conducted as they were at that period.

1316. Do you attribute any of the particular miscontent in Ireland to distress?—I think when a man is distressed he will not likely be content; I lay it down as a principle in my own mind, that if a man cannot earn what is sufficient to support himself and family in comfort, he cannot be content.

1317. Do you think it has led to an increase of drinking?—I should suppose it has in many instances.

1318. From despondency?—I should think so; a man is glad to fly to anything for relief if he cannot support his family comfortably.

1319. Do they dress as well as they did?—They do not.

1320. Do they attend divine service as much as they used to do?—That depends upon whether they have a relish for attending it.

1321. Do you think there is not a feeling in the mind of weavers that they do not like, except they have decent apparel, to go and attend divine service?—If they

they are very religiously inclined they are generally economical in their habits; and the desire they have to attend a place of worship induces them to strain every point to do so; and, of course, they generally manage to attend.

1322. Do you think their not having decent apparel dissuades some from attending?—Decidedly so, generally speaking.

1323. Are you aware of any system of the surreptitious sale of yarn which influences the reduction of the price?—I am. It is necessary just to state, that in Scotland the manufacturers receive very large orders for goods from, perhaps, a London or a Liverpool merchant. It is these two places, and Manchester, from which the orders chiefly come; perhaps they will give an order for 50,000 or 100,000 pieces of goods, and divide that among different houses, as it must be produced within a certain time; of course there is competition among those manufacturers to get weavers, in order to get on with the order. They, in order to make a calculation as to the actual cost of those goods, examine every fabric, to ascertain what quantity of weft is requisite to put on the shots required, and they make out their calculation accordingly. The basis of the calculation is the number of shots under the glass, and they expect the weaver will return the cloth that thickness; but, however, from the great desire to get the work in, together with the competition of the respective houses, and the great quantity of business that a man who has to take in the work has to do, and the anxiety he has to get it done, he examines if the work be neat, and, if so, he takes in that perhaps one or two shots less than what the ticket states and what the weft was given to do; in consequence of which he is able to save that weft and sell it.

1324. Then from whom is this competition?—Among the manufacturers when orders come.

1325. Then if there is great competition for work, is there great profit?—I cannot exactly state that, because, perhaps, they have all got one rate of profit, and perhaps they all take the order for the goods at the same price; the merchant will say, "What will you do 10,000 pieces for of this article?" and then he goes to another and says the same thing, and probably divides that among eight or ten different manufacturers, when perhaps the price will be the same or within a shade of it; but it is the interest and the object of the manufacturer to get this done as quickly as he can, and in order to do that, one may perhaps raise a little to one weaver and another raise a little to another; they may say, "If you return this work within a certain time, I will give you so much more."

1326. Do you think the manufacturer is led to increased exertion in consequence of any diminution of profit?—I think that must be so, as the manufacturer must of course make his business pay as a whole, by greater quantity, if smaller will not enable him to do it.

1327. Do you think increased competition has arisen in consequence of a decreased rate of profit?—I do. I ought to have stated the effect that this surreptitious yarn being introduced into Ireland has on the general trade; now, for instance, there is one particular trade, imitation shawls: a great quantity of coloured yarns come over to Ireland; those coloured yarns can be bought at about half price; of course the shawls made of them will be a great deal cheaper than those made of regular yarns, and being sold at a proportionably low price, have a very strong operation in the market on that particular article.

1328. Do you think they ever attempt to use good wefts of superior quality in the place of warps; have you ever known that?—That might be done to a certain extent, but I think it could not be done generally; there could, therefore, be no principle founded upon such an extreme case; it might be done to a small extent, as some fabrics do not require yarn of such good quality as others. I was about to state, in reference to the article of imitation shawls, that the weavers and those who make them with this yarn, will be able to undersell the regular manufacturer of them 3*s.* or 4*s.* a dozen sometimes.

1329. And in that way it operates on the trade of Ireland?—Yes.

1330. You have compared the condition of the weavers at this time and between 1805 and 1814; will you compare the condition of the manufacturers at those two different periods?—The manufacturers at that time could make a great deal more money than they can make now. I believe the profits were then much greater than they are now.

1331. You stated that the power-loom is competing so much with the plain weavers; do you think they will shortly be driven out of the market?—I think a number of articles will.

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1332. Now if the power-loom can do plain work much cheaper, why do not the manufacturers employ power-looms instead of hand-looms?—It would require a great deal of additional capital to do so; and this many manufacturers I think cannot command. I know some, if they had sufficient capital to make the attempt, would prefer steam-loom to hand-loom weaving.

1333. Have the wages of weavers been very often reduced during your experience for the same sort of work?—Frequently.

1334. Is there any difference in the wages now paid by the manufacturers of Belfast and its vicinity, among the different manufacturers?—There is a considerable difference occasionally.

1335. When the wages have been reduced, did the manufacturers approve of the reduction?—In general one manufacturer does not know what another is paying; it would be very desirable. I do not say the manufacturers wish for any law upon the subject, but it strikes me, and I have conversed with some of them who feel similarly on this point, that it would be very desirable if there could be an understanding between the different manufacturers as to what they would pay, because the less respectable manufacturers, if the trade is at all dull, certainly are inclined, if they can reduce the wages, to do so; and the humane men do not feel inclined, if they can help it, to follow them; and thus reductions are frequently made when there is no imperative necessity for them.

1336. Though it is difficult to ascertain what the rate of wages is that are paid by an individual manufacturer, is not there a general impression in the neighbourhood that such and such masters are high paying, and such and such masters low paying?—There is an impression of that kind; but, however, the prime weavers will naturally find that out, and of course go to the house that pays the highest; as may be expected, those manufacturers who pay the lowest get the worst tradesmen.

1337. Can a small number of manufacturers in a district, by obtaining a reduction of wages, cause that reduction to be general?—It depends on whether there is or is not a demand for work; if there be a demand, no man can reduce the wages; if there be not a demand, and the stocks of goods be heavy, they can be reduced to almost any extent.

1338. Then wherever there is a gradual reduction of wages, it argues, in your opinion, a decrease in demand?—Unquestionably, because whenever there is a demand for goods there is a natural tendency to a proportionate rise in the wages.

1339. What are the wages of the power-loom?—I was conversing with one of the power-loom manufacturers before I came away, and I think he told me they could earn 5*s.* or 6*s.* a week; from 6*s.* to 10*s.*

1340. Do either those who first reduce, or those who follow their example, derive any benefit from such a course?—I think very often they derive a loss from it, because, whenever a man reduces the wages, of course the individual who does so, immediately calculates what the first cost of the web will be at that reduction, and owing to the force of competition or other causes, the stock that he may have on hand, even with judicious management, may fall to that level.

1341. Then what manufacturers take the lead in reducing the wages; those paying the lower, or those paying the higher rate of wages?—The respectable manufacturers do not generally wish to reduce the wages if they can at all avoid it, because there is a feeling in their minds that the weavers are not sufficiently remunerated for their labour, and that unless wages be unnaturally high, it does not answer any useful purpose to do so.

1342. Then those wishing to reduce the wages can control those who are not inclined to reduce them?—In times when there is not a demand for work.

1343. Would it be a benefit to the manufacturer and the weaver if some plan could be devised to raise the wages, and make the rate more uniform than it now is?—If I must answer the question as to the general opinion of the Belfast manufacturers, I must say they are decidedly against any board of trade, because when I am asked a question, I will answer it honestly at all hazards.

1344. You are sent here by a general meeting, are you not?—There was a general meeting called by the sovereign, at the request of Mr. Maxwell, who addressed a letter to that effect to him.

1345. Who appointed you to come here?—The manufacturers met in pursuance of the sovereign's request, and I had the majority of votes for coming.

1346. Did they instruct you to say they were against any legislative interference?—

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ference?—They did not pass any resolution on the subject at the meeting, but I had a private conversation with some of them, and they stated generally they were averse to anything of that kind.

1347. Did they state to you their reasons?—They stated that it would lead to frequent altercations between the masters and the weavers; and that it would be fixing a point below which either power-loom manufacturers or foreign manufacturers might at least attempt to make them work. They could always by this fixed principle calculate what the price of yarn would be, and what the price of wages; and then their object would of course be to try at least either to make power-loom goods cheaper, or bring in goods from the Continent cheaper; whereas, from the fact of no positively existing standard of wages, the calculation of our first costs to the foreign manufacturer is attended not only with difficulty but with uncertainty.

1348. Do you think it desirable that the power to regulate the wages should be possessed by those manufacturers who are averse to reduce the wages?—I think if the manufacturers were to come to a general understanding among themselves as to what they should pay, it would be of great advantage to the trade.

1349. Do you think that can be done without legislative interference?—I am afraid not in Ireland, because one manufacturer is very unwilling to communicate what he pays to another. There may be one or two cases where they might not much object to do so, but generally speaking, they are not willing.

1350. Could it be done by legislative interference?—I really very much doubt it.

1351. Can you suggest any other plan than a board of trade which should place the power to regulate wages in the hands of those manufacturers who are averse to reduce wages?—I cannot, speaking generally for the manufacturers. I got a copy of Mr. Fielden's Bill before I left Ireland, when I called on a few manufacturers to show it to them, but they were so averse to any interference whatever, that they would not even look at it; I think one or two only took the trouble to glance over it.

1352. Could not the returns of wages paid by the manufacturers in your neighbourhood be obtained by inquiry of them and of their weavers?—If there was any way to force them to give statements as to the rate of wages they pay, of course it could be done; but I think they would not be willing to do it.

1353. Would you be willing?—I would, because I consider there is no occasion for anything to be hidden in any business. A man need not, of course, publicly communicate the amount of his profits, as that would be giving an unreasonable advantage to others, when, if he were to state the amount of any losses he might make, no assistance to enable him to meet them would be given; of course, if no assistance would be given in the one case, no information should fairly be expected in the other. On Friday I heard a description given by one of the honourable Members of some of the provisions of Mr. Fielden's Bill, and, from a cursory consideration of its merits, I must state that I would be favourable to the terms or provisions of that Bill being carried into effect. I would certainly prefer it decidedly to the boards of trade, for I fear they would lead to altercation, and would thus be injurious to the trade in general.

1354. And the board of trade would also lead to loss of time?—Yes, it would; and would produce jealousy between the manufacturer and the weaver; and these are strong arguments, I think, against the experiment of a board being tried.

1355. Do you think the manufacturers in that district would be willing to act as members of the board of trade?—I cannot speak generally for them.

1356. Both your own opinion and the opinion of your neighbourhood is against boards of trade, and you describe your own opinion to be in favour of Mr. Fielden's Bill?—I do; as an individual I would have no objection to the trial of any plan that might even by possibility tend to better the condition of the workman, provided, in doing so, that such legislative enactments be not made as might, in their operation, tend so to embarrass and fetter trade, that the workman might be reduced to a lower point than he occupies at present. Any legislative enactment that would place the British manufacturer in a less favourable position than that he now enjoys in the management of his business, would, I fear, give an undue advantage to foreign skill and enterprise.

1357. Could the probable quantity of goods of each sort made by every manufacturer be obtained in the same way as the wages are obtained?—Of course, if there

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there was law to force the manufacturer to give a statement, he could readily do it.

1358. He would be forced by an Act of Parliament?—Of course he would.

1359. Would it not be easy to select the least number of manufacturers given in such returns who together make at least one half the goods of each sort in each parish or township where hand-loom weaving is carried on in your county? Would it not be easy to take a majority of one or two out of those so selected who are paying the highest rate of wages for that sort of goods?—Yes.

1360. Would it not also be easy to determine the average wages paid by such majority for such sort of goods?—I should think so, because the only difficulty involved in the matter rests on the power to enforce it.

1361. The average wages having been so taken from the voluntary rate paid by many in the trade, could any just complaint be urged by any manufacturer against a law that required that no manufacturer in such parish or township should pay less wages than those?—It would be very desirable, if there was some plan that the manufacturers should pay all alike; but I was conversing with a manufacturer before I came away on that point, and he put a case which operated very strongly on my mind: "Supposing," said he, "I am in the habit of employing fifty weavers upon one article; I am inclined to continue to make that article; but a dullness comes, and I do not like to continue to make goods and find money to pay workmen for them, if I have reason to believe they will likely lie on my hands, unless I think I can get them done something lower, to make it an object to me, first, to run the chance of whether they will sell; and, secondly, to pay me for the interest of my money that may be sunk in them. If I do not continue to make the article, the weavers may not be able to find employment; and the question comes to this, whether it is better for them to weave for less wages, or be thrown entirely idle."

1362. Now, as a manufacturer, for the interest of both parties, do you think it most advisable, under the circumstance of a dullness or slackness of trade, to reduce the wages, or to curtail the hours of labour?—When there is no demand for goods, of course a man will not have an interest to make them; he begins to calculate, if he does do so, under what circumstances will he make them? Because, when there is a dullness, it will not answer his purpose to go on making, unless he can produce them at a lower rate, and thereby be enabled to hold out such inducements to his customers as will prompt them to purchase from him in quantity.

1363. That is on the principle you before stated, that an absence of demand causes a reduction of wages?—Yes.

1364. Do you think, under the circumstances of the absence of a demand and a diminution in profit, that the manufacturer is induced to make more goods, in order to receive the same amount of profit from a greater quantity of goods?—A manufacturer, of course, would always like to make a certain rate of profit; because, if he do not, he has but slight inducement to carry on the trade; but to increase the quantity of goods when there is no demand for them, I think, is rather the way to make a loss than a gain.

1365. Does the workman increase his labour with the depression of wages?—Of course he will; because if he get less, he must necessarily increase his labour, in order to make up the deficiency.

1366. And therefore the depression of trade tends to increase the quantity of manufacture produced?—I know men who could not get work in a very depressed state of trade, and who were obliged, in order to exist, to begin and make a web or two for themselves, and some of those men are now in very respectable circumstances.

1367. Would not that rather curtail labour than produce a reduction of wages?—In a depressed time I think it is better to curtail the quantity than to go on making.

1368. Now after such a regulation as has been alluded to with regard to wages, would there be some inequality of wages; would some pay the average only, and others pay more than the average?—If any law were passed to that effect, of course the manufacturers would pay what they would be obliged to pay; but if any great demand were to come, some would be inclined to pay more, because they could not perhaps get weavers; as it often occurs that when weavers are wanted, they cannot be got.

1369. But being a difference now, why will there not after such a law be a difference

ference?—I do not see the tendency of that question; perhaps the Committee will put it in another shape.

1370. According to the plan suggested, the average wages of the higher paying manufacturers, producing half the goods, is to be taken as a criterion of the rate to be paid by the rest of the trade; but to form that average some must pay higher than the average and some lower; would not those paying the higher rate still continue to pay a higher rate than the average?—Perhaps they would, if they could not get it done lower; but it would be an inducement in depressed times to have it done lower.

1371. But in a fair demand?—I think in a fair demand all the manufacturers of good repute would wish to adequately support the respectable weavers, because it is at all times the interest of every manufacturer to stand well with the workmen; if not, he cannot get the work made either of such quality, or in such quantity, as the circumstances of his business may require.

1372. You seem to have a strong feeling with regard to a depressed time for trade; do you consider this to be a depressed time?—The last year and a half has been an extremely brisk time; that is, I mean, for weavers.

1373. And have the profits increased in consequence?—I do not think they have with the Irish manufacturer; but one chief cause of the briskness has arisen from the competition of Scotch and English houses.

1374. In purchases?—No, in sending branches over.

1375. Did you ever know any other period within your memory when a briskness of trade did not increase the profit?—It is extremely difficult to increase the rate of profit, owing to the general competition of one manufacturer with another. If there be a demand for goods, a manufacturer can sometimes charge a higher rate of profit; but this is counterbalanced by his having to submit to frequent reductions at less favourable times.

1376. Do you think that this increased demand, this briskness, arises from an increase in the home consumption or an increase in the foreign consumption?—I think it arises from both home and foreign. The latter, so far as the muslin manufacture is concerned, has much increased within these few years past; but the former has this some time past been dull, owing to the great rise on cotton yarns.

1377. How do you judge of the increase or decrease of the home trade?—By the quantity of goods we can sell.

1378. From the demands you have from country towns?—From Dublin, Cork and other places.

1379. And those are for the consumption of those places and not for export?—A considerable portion of the goods I think the manufacturers are now selling is for export.

1380. Then would you not say one of the great causes of the briskness was the export?—The export I think is one of the causes with some houses.

1381. If returns of wages and of goods manufactured were required by law periodically, and the average wages taken as before stated, would the practice cause a slow but certain rise in wages?—I cannot speak with certainty on that point, but I still think it is the demand that will cause the quantity to be increased or lessened.

1382. Would such a process create a competition to pay liberal wages, and stay the competition now so much complained of to reduce the wages?—It would be regulated then, as now, by the demand for goods; but it would be a great advantage to the trade if there could be a general scale of paying, that is, if the manufacturers could agree among themselves on some principle; because then one manufacturer would not be able to undersell another, from one paying a lower scale of wages than the other.

1383. Do not the wages of the weavers depend in a considerable degree on the profit of the manufacturer?—If the manufacturer receives an order for goods, and if he agree to have that executed within a certain time, he must pay rather higher wages, in order to get that number of hands engaged which will be necessary to enable him to realize his object.

1384. And yet you stated the profit of the manufacturer had not risen in consequence of the briskness of the trade the last year and a half?—I do not think the profit has increased; but the general or annual profit depends on the quantity of business a man does; the rate of profit, or the per cent. profit on the mere value of the goods may not have risen, although the aggregate profit may.

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1385. Have you any objection to state what rate of profit the manufacturers generally do make?—I do not see any objection; I do not think the manufacturers generally can have more than from 7 ½ to 10 per cent. on what they do.

1386. On the selling price?—Yes.

1387. Including interest?—Including interest. I do not think they have from more than 7 ½ to 10 per cent. profit on all the goods they make.

1388. How often do they turn their money?—They may turn it three or four times perhaps in the course of a year.

1389. That is to say, they make 28 per cent. a year; is that what you mean?—No.

1390. Do you mean they make 7 ½ per cent. each time they turn their money, and they turn it three or four times a year?—I do not see how I can answer the question.

1391. What is the average profit; if 10,000 *l.* were laid out in trade, what would it pay per annum?—The way I judge is this: I have a partner in trade, and upon the quantity of business we do, we perhaps cannot make more than 600 *l.* or 700 *l.* a year.

1392. On 10,000 *l.*?—The sales may be 12,000 *l.*; it may be perhaps that we make 600 *l.* or 700 *l.* a year on an average.

1393. Then is that the profit?—We can make 600 *l.* or 700 *l.* a year profit.

1394. And you said the capital was 10,000 *l.*?—I would scarcely like to go so minutely into it.

1395. Do you think on an average, in the last 10 years, that manufacturers generally have improved their circumstances in Belfast?—The way I judge is this: manufacturers occasionally lose heavily by bad debts and by shipping goods; one year a manufacturer may make a considerable sum, and another year he may lose a considerable sum; but the way I judge is, in six or seven years how much is a man richer than he was at the commencement.

1396. The question is, whether on an average the manufacturers' capital has increased in the last 10 years?—I think they are in better circumstances now than perhaps they were 10 years ago, because the trade is carried on on a more safe principle.

1397. But supposing a manufacturer had invested 10,000 *l.* ten years ago, how much more or how much less than that 10,000 *l.* now exists in the manufacturer's pocket?—I could not answer that question generally, because I have not the means of knowing what manufacturers have made; but I do not see that manufacturers generally can accumulate a great deal of property; in the course of years some might perhaps, if they had 8,000 *l.* or 10,000 *l.*

1398. Do you think it is the case generally that money invested in Belfast 10 years ago has diminished or increased, taking the whole mass of capital invested in Belfast?—It would strike me that within the last six or seven years the manufacturers have increased their capital; some, however, have failed.

1399. You consider the 10,000 *l.* has been increased?—I could not say the extent of the increase, but I think that the manufacturers generally have made money the last six or seven years, and I think now they are in a very fair way of losing it if they do not take care, for the speculations in cotton wool are so great, and yarns are so dear, that I rather think the manufacturers will lose money, without great management and caution.

1400. You stated there had been some failures; have the failures been to a great extent?—A considerable extent in some instances.

1401. Then when you estimate the increase that must have been made to the 10,000 *l.* invested 10 years ago, do you take into account the persons who have failed as well as those persons who are now in the trade?—My observations related only to those persons who have stood; I cannot strike the balance of profit on the general question, between those who have stood and those who have failed. The way I judge of the comparative safety of the trade is this: formerly, manufacturers used to accept bills, and now, in general, they pay cash for their yarns, because they have such an inducement to do so, that a man would not be considered quite safe, if he did not generally do it. Generally speaking, within the last seven years they have managed to do it, and I judge from that they have made money.

1402. Do you think more has been gained by some than has been lost by others in the trade of Belfast?—In order to ascertain that, a general profit and loss account of the business of all the manufacturers would require to be taken.

1403. Do you consider that, supposing a man began with a capital of 10,000 *l.*

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ten years ago, by employing that in manufacture he has received a fair remuneration from the profits of his manufacture for his capital, his skill and the employment of his time?—I think there are very few manufacturers in Belfast worth 10,000 *l.*; there may be two or three.

1404. But say 500 *l.*?—I think that a manufacturer that has had perhaps 2,000 *l.* or 3,000 *l.* employed, and who has paid great attention to his business, and managed it with great prudence and skill, may have made money during that time; but I am certain it is a business, that unless a man watches well in all its bearings, he will lose money.

1405. Is not that the case with all trades, that there are some more capable of carrying on business than others?—It depends in a great measure on the connexion a man has. Sometimes the losses are so heavy, that from want of good connexion even industrious and prudent men are not able to realize money.

1406. Now, taking 10 individuals who started in trade 10 years ago, do you think that more of those have failed or not got a return for their capital, or more have gained and done well?—I should think all those individuals who have been in business the last seven years; I do not think that 10 years is exactly the criterion; from 1827 would be better, because in 1826 the trade was extremely depressed.

1407. Well, take 15 years?—I could give a better idea from 1827 until this year; 1826, as I remarked before, was an extremely depressed year; goods in fact were sold nearly for nothing; but in 1827 it got a little better; the trade was that year purged, if I may use such an expression. In 1826 a number of failures took place, and some new persons got into it in 1827 who had a certain capital, and those men, from enterprize and attention, up till the year 1832 I think, generally speaking, improved in their circumstances.

1408. Take the period from 1815 to the present time, and take 20 individuals who were then in trade with a certain capital of 2,000 *l.* or 3,000 *l.*; do you think more of those are now existing, and have gained on their capital, or more have gone out of trade ruined?—I think from the year 1812 to 1826 that decidedly the greater proportion were losers.

1409. And a very doubtful thing since?—Very doubtful as to the quantity of money made.

1410. Now you have spoken favourably of Mr. Fielden's Bill?—I gave merely my own impression.

1411. If an Act were founded on it, do you think the Act could be evaded easily?—It would be difficult to make any Act that could not be evaded; but I think it would be well to try it, at all events.

1412. Would the power there given for settling disputes by arbitration be sufficient?—There is an Arbitration Act already existing in Ireland.

1413. Is it similar to the one proposed in Mr. Fielden's Bill?—It only arranges points in dispute between the masters and the operatives.

1414. Who are the arbitrators there?—It is very seldom we have an arbitration, for I would rather lose a little by a workman, than have either law or arbitration; but if at any time I have one, I generally choose a manufacturer. The weaver summons the manufacturer before the sovereign or sitting magistrate, and the sovereign, not understanding the trade, he will decide that it must be settled by arbitration, and the parties are named; the weaver names the one and the manufacturer the other.

1415. Does the weaver name a weaver?—The weaver names a weaver, and the manufacturer a manufacturer. I have sometimes seen a weaver willing to leave it to a manufacturer, but generally speaking, the disposition of the weaver is to choose a weaver, and that of the manufacturer a manufacturer; and if they cannot agree, then a third person must be chosen by the arbitrators, or if they cannot agree, by the magistrate.

1416. Is there any expense attached to such arbitrations?—The expense of the bond; and the weaver, if it is decided against the manufacturer, has a claim for his time.

1417. What is the cost of the bond?—It is very trifling.

1418. You are aware that that is the same plan of arbitration proposed by Mr. Fielden's Bill?—I should suppose Mr. Fielden's Bill embraces much more than that.

1419. But the same kind of arbitration?—I should suppose something similar; I did not however look particularly at that point.

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1420. Is this arbitration popular among the masters and the men; is it often appealed to to settle disputes?—I think it is very disagreeable to have disputes with workmen at all, and I think respectable houses generally have no disputes; but a number of men who are anxious to make catches, sometimes take advantage in depressed times, which renders an appeal to arbitration necessary. In such times, from following this course, these men get a bad name amongst workmen; and those manufacturers who stand high with the weavers have, of course, always a preference given to them. This is so much the case, that when the trade becomes brisk, the others have (what may be fairly denominated) to bribe the weavers by extravagant prices, to induce them to work for them at all, which operates much to the prejudice of the fair manufacturer.

1421. You stated that the manufacturers who pay lower rates of wages are generally the least respectable class?—They are.

1422. Do you think that is a class which could be interfered with by the Legislature? For instance, a weaver is out of employ, and cannot obtain work from a respectable manufacturer; he goes to a manufacturer who is not so respectable, and says, "I will take your work at a lower rate of wages;" so that he is interested in concealing the bargain between the manufacturer and himself; now do you think that any legislation could reach a bargain of that sort when work is slack?—For instance, I will put a case: Suppose a manufacturer at a particular time had a very large stock of goods, and he could not sell that stock, when a man who had perhaps 1,000 *l.* or 2,000 *l.* to spare, might think of commencing the business; he would commence just at that juncture of time, thinking that as the workmen could not get employ, it was an appropriate time for him to commence; and, in consequence of having the idea that he could get the work made so much lower than the usual price, of course he would take on as great a number of hands as he could, and would thus accumulate a stock of goods that he perhaps might be enabled, with a fair profit, to sell 10 or 20 per cent. lower than the man who had previously accumulated so large a stock; and of course this man would lose in proportion to the extent of his stock.

1423. Would an Act of Parliament prevent that state of things?—I fear it very much; because, when a workman is brought to that point of necessity that he must say, "Shall I take this, or shall my family starve?" of course nature dictates what he will do.

1424. Is it the fact at this moment among the respectable manufacturers that the rate of wages is pretty much the same?—It would strike me among respectable houses it is pretty much the same.

1425. Do not you think it would be an advantage, if at periods not very distant from each other, an average rate of wages were publicly recognised as paid by respectable houses?—I do not see any evil that could result from it, except this, that foreigners might come to know what the average was, and might immediately begin to calculate what they could make the goods at. I will state an instance that occurred the other day. A gentleman stated to me that he was a partner in a concern in Birmingham, and that on the Continent, where he resided, at Hambro' or somewhere near it, they were able to produce certain articles lower than they could be produced at Birmingham, and the consequence was, that Birmingham was losing that branch of trade; and he said the cause of that was owing to provision being lower on the Continent, and therefore the workmen could afford to work for less wages.

1426. But the arrangement that has been spoken of would not affect that state of things; there is the same motive on the Continent always to remain cheap?—Yes; but to place ourselves in circumstances in which the Continental manufacturers could ascertain with precision the first cost of our goods would give them an advantage, by which they might profit at our expense.

1427. Do not you think the price at which the goods sell in the market is the best evidence of what they cost?—It is a criterion frequently, but not always; sometimes, if a man have a bill to pay, and has not money to pay it, rather than let it be protested he will sacrifice his goods.

1428. Do you think that, generally speaking, the workmen contrive to obtain a fair proportion of the profits of their employers?—That is a question I cannot answer, because employers are not willing to tell their profits, and of course they would not be willing to tell them to their workmen.

1429. But supposing the profits to be large, do you not think it creates a competition in the purchase of labour?—Of course it does; if a manufacturer has a demand

a demand for goods, he is willing to give a portion of the profit to the weaver, in order to get the weavers to work for him; because, whenever there is a demand, we find it difficult to get weavers.

1429*. And therefore the increase of profit among the masters tends to increase the wages among the men?—Of course; because if a man could get 20 per cent. profit on goods, and cannot get them made, it would be better to have only 10 per cent., if by dividing the profit, a sufficient number could be produced to answer his demand.

1430. Do you think the establishment of boards of trade would increase the profits of the employers?—I am very doubtful of it.

1431. If it did not increase the profits of the employers, could any increase of wages be permanently supported?—I do not think it could.

1432. In fact, you do not think there is margin enough in the profits of the employers to increase materially the wages of labour?—I think there is nothing can increase wages except a demand for goods; I am decidedly of opinion that that will at all times.

1433. Speaking of the profits of the trade, you have stated, that you think upon the whole a few individuals have improved their circumstances in the last seven years?—I do think so.

1434. But from 1815 up to 1826 the balance of loss prevailed?—Decidedly, that is my opinion.

1435. Since the year 1826 to the present time, do you think that any 10 individuals, employing capital and industry and economy, in the general trade of Belfast, have generally improved their circumstances?—I think they have improved their circumstances, but I do not think they have become very rich.

1436. You think extreme economy and care have enabled them to live?—I do think so; and more than live, in my opinion.

1437. But many of them have still done ill?—Some have.

1438. Persons with prudence?—Yes, from losses; the most prudent men meet occasionally with heavy losses.

1439. You say this depression of wages has taken place among the hand-loom weavers; do you happen to know whether any corresponding depression of wages has taken place among farm labourers in the north of Ireland?—It strikes me (I am not versed in that exactly), but it strikes me wages have rather decreased among them also, because we always find, if the cotton and linen trade be not good, that wages fall generally.

1440. From your recollection, do you think that the whole of the industrious classes generally have been injured in the last 20 years?—I think the mechanical classes generally are not so well off as they were 20 years ago.

1441. Not the agriculturists?—I should think not.

1442. To what do you attribute this general depression among the agricultural classes in the north of Ireland?—I am not so well acquainted with agriculture that I should like to hazard any answer that should be taken as evidence; but I will give my opinion. I think the high price that was got for land during the period of the war, and the high price of provisions at that time justified that high price; the price of provision has since fallen so much, the price of land remaining pretty much the same, that I think the farming classes have been quite unable to pay that disproportion of rent, and I think that has caused them to be in very indifferent circumstances since.

1443. Do you think the price of provisions has fallen so much as the price of hand-loom weaving?—I think so. In 1808 oatmeal sold for 1*l.* 5*s.* 9*d.*, and I think now it is selling at 10*s.* and 11*s.*

1444. What weight?—112 lbs.

1445. Then there must be some common cause which has acted in producing a depression?—Yes.

1446. What do you consider that common cause to be, in addition to the power-looms?—That is one cause, the cause I have stated.

1447. The fall of price?—The fall of price, and land being as high as it was before the price fell.

1448. What do you think is the cause of the reduction of the price generally that has taken place since the war?—The farmers not being in circumstances in which they could purchase many of the necessaries of life, of course would have the effect of lessening the value of goods.

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1449. Then what has produced the poverty of farmers?—Not being able to pay their rents; those rents being out of proportion with the prices of produce.

1450. What do you think is the cause that has reduced the price of farming produce within the gripe of the rents?—It is difficult to answer that question, except that the prices that the farmers get for produce will not enable them to pay the high rents. During the war pork sold, I should think, for four times what it does now; and the fact of the war existing, I think, caused that price; and now the war not existing, of course there is not the necessity for the article.

1451. Do you recollect that bank-notes at that period were not payable in gold and silver money?—We are very well satisfied in Ireland with the bank-notes; the banks are all on a very safe principle.

1452. But during the war the bank-notes were not payable in gold and silver?—I think not.

1453. Then do not you think the contraction of the currency has had something to do with it?—We have had no contraction of currency in Ireland, so far as bank-notes are concerned.

1454. Do you recollect the breaking of the banks in Ireland?—Not in the north.

1455. Is there any importation of foreign goods into Ireland now?—No, I think not. Of course a great deal of goods are bought by Irish merchants from Manchester and Glasgow.

1456. Then there can be no injury from the importation of foreign goods?—No, I do not think there is.

1457. The 15,000 weavers you spoke of are employed in the cotton trade principally?—Yes.

1458. You have many weavers employed, also, in the linen trade in your neighbourhood?—Yes, a great number.

1459. What is the condition of the linen trade as compared with the cotton trade with regard to wages?—I could not exactly state that, because, as I stated before, there is a considerable difference in the way they work. A linen weaver generally purchases the yarn himself, prepares it for weaving, and gets it wove, and then goes to market and sells it; the price fluctuating. Sometimes, of course, they may have better and sometimes worse wages, the precise amount of which, however, cannot easily be ascertained. The linen weavers generally have patches of land, so that they are not altogether dependent on weaving.

1460. But do you observe the condition, generally speaking, of the linen weavers is better than that of the cotton weavers, so far as you can judge from their appearance?—I scarcely ever see a linen weaver, because there is no linen weaving about Belfast; but I rather think they are in better circumstances than cotton weavers.

1461. Suppose a law were passed giving power to the master manufacturers of your district to fix upon a rate of wages which should be binding upon all, and which, consequently, would prevent the occurrence you have just now stated, of persons starting as manufacturers in distressed times, and taking advantage of the want of employment of weavers; do not you think the passing of such a law would be an advantage both to the master as well as to the weaver?—It would certainly be an advantage to the man who had a large stock.

1462. But what would be the effect on the trade generally?—It might be advantageous to the trade; but it would be very difficult to pass a law fixing that a man could not go into a trade, for that is what it would come to.

1463. Now supposing a rate of wages were fixed and agreed upon by a majority of manufacturers, and nobody should be allowed to pay a less rate of wages than the scale agreed upon; do not you think that would afford protection both to the manufacturer as well as to the weaver?—I think it would: I think it would be a protection to the manufacturer; but whether it would be an advantage to the weaver is another question; because, if the weaver cannot get work, what is he to do?

1464. But you stated before that the wages depended on the demand?—So they do.

1465. Now the demand is not increased by a large quantity of goods being made at low wages; you can only sell the whole quantity of goods; and, therefore, if the weavers are employed at fair wages, or all on equal wages, they produce the same quantity of goods as if they were partially employed in distressed times on

more

more wages?—The best way under such circumstances would be for the manufacturer to stop altogether for a little, until he could get his stock off.

1466. If you employed 350 men and had a large stock on hand, probably you could not find full employment for them, but some one else might employ them; but would it not be advantageous to the manufacturer if he were to give them employment at the same wages as he would give them for making up his stock?—I think it would be advantageous to the manufacturer, under such circumstances, that wages should not be reduced, at least while he continued to hold a large stock of goods.

1467. And do not you think that would be advantageous as well to the weaver?—Perhaps he would not be inclined to employ him at all then.

1468. But the goods would be still wanted; he would give perhaps half work?—But what would the weavers do in the meantime? that is the question. A man having a family to support, if he cannot get employment he must starve, and he considers it better to be employed at half price than not to be employed at all. That is precisely the state of the question.

1469. But would it not be better for him to be partly employed a short time till the trade recovered itself, than for the market to be glutted by goods produced at low wages?—Decidedly it would.

1470. You have stated you think there is no diminution of currency in Ireland; do you mean then to infer that agricultural and manufactory produce now produces as much currency as it did formerly?—No, that is not what I mean; I mean, that we this number of years past have had banks, and we have now a greater number of banks than we ever before had. I allude to the circumstance of the banks in England not being allowed to issue one-pound notes; our banks issue one-pound notes, and we find it a great advantage to our trade; it would be very injurious indeed to the general trade of Belfast, if our bankers were prevented from issuing them.

1471. Then when you say there has been no diminution in the currency, you confine it to cash notes?—To bank-notes.

1472. And not to bills of exchange?—No, simply to notes.

1473. In point of fact, there has been a serious reduction in artificial money, such as bills of exchange?—I should imagine there is not so much money in circulation as there was during the high war prices, but I think it might be extended, if necessary, to what it was some years ago.

1474. Should you think landed property now produces as much currency as it did during the war?—I think not, rents being a great deal lower.

1475. So that on the whole there is a great contraction of the existing currency?—Of the general currency.

1476. You stated just now, that you had the information of a Hambro' merchant that Birmingham goods were now manufactured at such a price that they were likely to be undersold in Germany?—One or two articles only.

1477. Supposing that Parliament were to pass a law that the manufacturers of these Birmingham goods should raise the rate of wages, would not that effectually shut out the export of those goods?—I think decidedly so; that is just where the difficulty is.

1478. Could any law that Parliament could pass enable you to pay a higher rate of wages if the price of goods would not remunerate you?—Certainly not.

1479. An honourable Member has asked you what the condition of the town of Belfast is at the present moment, 1835, compared to 1826; has not the trade very much increased?—Yes.

1480. Is there not a great deal more shipping?—A great deal more.

1481. And, generally speaking, the town is very much increased and improved?—Yes, and the weavers now are employed, and they were not employed then. If either provisions were a little lower, or the wages a little higher, I consider the weavers would be as well off as they have been this number of years past, but at the same time they have too little wages for what they have to pay for the produce, and the manufacturers cannot help it.

1482. You say there has been no restriction of the issue of one-pound notes in Ireland, the same as in this part of the country?—No.

1483. What is the rate of interest on the discount of bills by the bank?—Five per cent.

1484. Do you find anybody complain of the burthen of the rate of interest?—We think it too high.

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1485. The question has been asked you if the trade of Belfast has not increased very much within the last few years, and you have answered in the affirmative?—I speak generally of trade.

1486. Are you aware whether any part of the trade of the West Riding of Yorkshire has been removed from Belfast?—Very little, I think; one trade has increased considerably, that is the pork and ham trade.

1487. What part of the weaving trade?—There are two Manchester manufacturers that have branches in Belfast, and they employ 800 weavers.

1488. There have been many capitalists, English and Scotch, settled in Belfast lately, in consequence of the lower rate of wages there?—Yes, all those Scotch branches have come there, I think, in consequence of the lower rate of wages.

1489. And have those been established since 1826?—They have, I think, within six or seven years.

1490. You have been asked if Parliament were to pass a compulsory rate of wages, whether that would not affect the trade of Birmingham in relation to the foreign market; do you understand Mr. Fielden's Bill to dictate a compulsory rate of wages?—It merely dictates that an average rate of wages shall be paid; and if that average is to be compulsory, I am not exactly certain whether that is the tendency of the Bill or not; I think it is.

1491. The average rate of wages is an average voluntarily undertaken to be paid by the masters working up the greater part of goods?—I do not think anything can be better; I have never seen nor could not have contemplated anything better than what that Bill proposes, so far as I can judge from a cursory consideration of its merits.

1492. But, according as you understand the question, could that be called a Parliamentary dictation of the rate of wages?—To a certain extent it would, but it would not perhaps in one sense, because it was merely averaging what existed previously.

1493. It would be a dictation to the lower paying masters, but not the higher paying ones?—I think not. There is one remark I wish to make in allusion to the question that was put, in case I should forget it; it has been a great advantage to the north of Ireland the introduction of Scotch and English branches of manufactory; the weavers were not employed regularly until the introduction of those branches. The cause of those branches existing arises from the circumstance of the wages being lower than those paid in Manchester and Glasgow: if any law were to be passed to assimilate the wages of the countries I think it would be ruinous to the north of Ireland, and to the weavers of the north of Ireland; I mean to the cotton trade of the north of Ireland, and particularly to the weavers. The existence of trades' unions in Glasgow was much complained of by manufacturers there, and in consequence of the Belfast weavers not associating themselves with those trades' unions, a number of Scotch branches have been established there, in order to avoid the operation of the unions, because they were felt to be very tyrannical. I have heard Scotch gentlemen complain of that; but the Irish weavers not having associated themselves with the trades' unions, the manufacturers found it more their interest to employ the Irish weavers, not so much perhaps from getting their work done lower, as their not being under the dictation of those unions.

1494. Have you any notion of what those trade unions arose from?—I suppose a combination not to work under a certain sum.

1495. To prevent the reduction of wages?—Yes, probably that was it; I think that must be the case; we have none of them in Ireland, at least I mean in the cotton trade.

1496. Do you think there was any feeling on the part of the English and the Scotch capitalists who came to the neighbourhood of Belfast, that they were not able to make a profit at the rate of wages they were compelled to pay in England and Scotland, but that they would be able to make a profit at the rate of wages they had to pay in Belfast?—It strikes me that the rate of wages in Belfast is not much less to the manufacturer, taking into consideration the expense attendant on establishing and carrying on branches there. It may be five per cent. less.

1497. But would that cause persons to prefer one place to another?—It would. I state this from the statement of weavers to me; the Irish weavers are satisfied to work for less than the Manchester and Glasgow prices, because rent and provisions are lower.

1498. But, in consequence of that, do not you think it forms an inducement to the English and Scotch to settle with their capital in Ireland?—It does.

1499. Do you think that has been occasioned by the fall of profits, and that the English manufacturer has reduced himself to the necessity of coming to a place where there existed a smaller rate of wages?—Perhaps it has; but there is one house I have reason to believe came over, not because the wages were lower, but to avoid the operation of the trades' unions.

1500. In point of fact, you think that the increase that has taken place in the trade of Belfast since 1826, has arisen in a great measure from English and Scotch capitalists settling there since that time, and not in consequence of any increase in the betterness of the circumstances of the manufacturers previously existing there?—I think it has been chiefly caused by the introduction of the Scotch and English branches; and also by the increase of foreign demand.

1501. And you have stated that a depression of wages tended to produce an increased produce?—It tends to make men work harder, and of course to an increased production of goods.

1502. Do not you think the appearance of increased trade about Belfast may be mainly owing to the increased pressure of the times?—Trade has been increasing the last year and a half; it is now, however, considerably affected by a great rise in cotton wool and cotton yarn.

1503. Have any of the new buildings been built by insolvent persons?—I do not like exactly to answer that question, for there are some men who passed as insolvent, I do not know exactly that they were insolvent, but since that time they have built houses; and sometimes men build houses, and raise money upon them, and are afterwards obliged to stop. It is not always a criterion of wealth the increase of houses. I wish to inform the Committee that the cotton spinning trade in the north of Ireland has considerably decreased of late years, but it has been substituted by the flax trade. There have been 16 flax mills established within the last two or three years.

1504. You have stated that some of the masters, or several of them, or many of them, object to the board of trade system?—They all do, generally speaking.

1505. Both great and small?—Both great and small generally object to any interference at all; but, however, I wish to state, there are many humane men whose objection to boards of trade does not arise from any wish that something should not be attempted to better the condition of the workmen, but simply that they think it would (though it might appear to please the weavers for the time, yet that it would) actually injure them in the end. That being the feeling by which many of them are influenced, of course no bad feeling on the part of the weavers should be encouraged towards them.

1506. Those wages that you mentioned as varying from 7 *s.* to 8 *s.*, is there any deduction from them?—No, no deduction.

1507. Is there no deduction for carriage?—I am not certain whether the Scotch branches charge or not, but I rather think they do not make any charge for carriage; I think not.

1508. Nor winding?—The winding of course. There are some houses pay by the piece, others by the ell; when the houses pay by the ell, they pay for winding in addition to the price by the ell; some houses pay by the piece; they do it as a matter of convenience, but the weavers do not like it so well as by the ell.

1509. But the weaver finds his own loom?—Yes, he is at that expense.

1510. That has to be deducted from his wages?—Of course.

1511. What portion of the 16 mills now employed in spinning flax was once employed in spinning cotton?—The Messrs. ——— formerly had a cotton mill, which was burnt; and they now have two flax mills.

1512. Then there has been one mill converted from spinning cotton to spinning flax?—There was one very large mill.

1513. You have spoken of the very great depression and distress which existed in 1826; can you explain the cause of that depression?—The want of demand for goods. I suppose in the previous years a great deal of goods were made, and the market was overstocked.

1514. Do you think the panic in London had any effect?—I think it likely had.

1515. A contraction of currency?—I think very likely that had an effect at the time.

1516. Have you had occasion to notice whether much benefit has been derived to Ireland by the provincial banks?—Decidedly; I think it would injure the north of Ireland extremely if anything were to come to them; because they are fixed on such

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such a basis that they cannot fail, none of them can fail, for there are 300 or 400 proprietors, and every one of them is answerable.

1517. Then if such an extension of currency were to take effect in Ireland as to raise the price to the war level, you think Ireland would be prosperous again?—I do not think any extension of the currency could take place; it would not be safe to have banks upon any other system than the one we have them upon.

1518. But you think, upon the same system, an increase of currency would still produce an increase of prosperity?—It might have that effect; but any kind of fictitious paper I think not good in the end.

1519. Have you not got fictitious rents to pay?—If they are too high they are fictitious.

1520. Are they not generally too high in Ireland?—The rents of land are too high, but I do not think that applies to houses. I think the builders generally, and the proprietors of houses, complain very much about rents being low.

1521. But, generally speaking, the prices of property are not remunerating?—I think not; and I think it is one of the causes of distress among the peasantry of Ireland.

1522. And therefore you think either the rents ought to be reduced largely, or the money means ought to be increased?—I think the different points ought to be balanced.

1523. When you speak of rents being high, you mean to say the rents under leases?—Under leases I should think.

1524. And without leases?—Or perhaps without leases.

1525. But can rents that are let from year to year be too high when there is competition?—I really do not like to give evidence on a point that I am not well acquainted with.

1526. But you are a practical man yourself; you must know whether land or buildings, or whatever it be that are let from year to year, can be too high?—My observation applied merely to the rent of land, it could not apply to houses; I mean lands generally; as to lands not on lease, I do not know; for if a man have land, the question comes to this: he will say, "Must I leave this, or give this rent?" He would be willing to try and give the rent rather than throw his family into starvation.

1527. You think then that when a general fall of price takes place in Ireland, a rack-rent is nearly as onerous on the tenant as a lease; he cannot escape from it, can he?—He cannot; he must either pay the rent or run behind; and frequently the landlord cannot get him out.

1528. And if he gives up his farm, can he do anything with his capital? He cannot; perhaps he has no capital to do anything with.

1529. And therefore to have a rack-rent from year to year is nearly as compulsory as to be bound by a lease?—I should think so.

1530. You stated that some weavers have a little land, and do not entirely depend on weaving for their livelihood; what is the number of those?—I should think 10,000 weavers have more or less of land.

1531. Out of the 15,000 round Belfast?—I should think 8,000 or 10,000.

1532. Are they subject to as much distress in times of low wages as those weavers that depend wholly on weaving for their livelihood?—Decidedly not; because having patches of land, they are able to live much cheaper; their rents are lower, and they grow potatoes and other produce on which they can live.

1533. They are generally in respectable circumstances?—Some are; but not generally, where they have only small patches of land.

1534. But many have 10 or 15 acres of land?—Those who have such a quantity as this are enabled to pay their rent, and to live more comfortably of course than those who have a much smaller quantity, particularly when their families assist them by weaving.

1535. You have stated that in times of a depressed state of wages some operatives have been obliged to work a loom on their own account, and you have stated some of these have become respectable manufacturers?—That is not exactly what I stated; I stated they had been obliged to commence manufacturing on their own account, perhaps with one loom, and had increased from time to time as their capital increased, and they had come to be men of respectability in consequence of that.

1536. Can you state the number of these instances within the last few years?—Not a great number perhaps in Belfast; not more than six or eight have risen to anything that would be very striking.

1537. How

1537. How many of these men that you have spoken of had 10 or 15 acres of land a-piece?—I could not exactly say that; but I know, from experience, that a number of the weavers we have been in the habit of employing, have, under the Marquis of Downshire and the Marquis of Hertford, perhaps three or four acres of land.

1538. Is that the usual quantity?—The usual quantity; some two, some one.

1539. Have or have not bank-notes been in constant circulation in Belfast?—They have; as much now as they were at any time; we have four banks in Belfast at present.

1540. Can you state to the Committee the number of individuals whose mills have been changed from cotton to linen?—There is one or more that has; the precise number I do not recollect.

1541. Can you state to the Committee, where the change took place, whether they employ fewer hands or an increased number of hands?—I think much the same; that is, however, merely matter of opinion.

1542. And their wages?—I cannot state precisely their wages; I do not hear any complaint; I should think the flax-spinners are very well paid; I believe they get very fair wages.

1543. Now, of course, though there are so few power-looms in Belfast, you feel the competition of the Glasgow power-looms?—Of course we do, and must do it, in the kind of goods that they make.

1544. They do not weave much above 40 wefts?—I think not; they make some thick stripes, such as we make in the north of Ireland, and it of course operates as a check; but that trade has been pretty good these last two years.

1545. Do you export much cotton yarn from Belfast, or did you, to the Continent?—No, I do not think there is any exported to the Continent, but a number of the cotton spinners export it to Glasgow, and I think to Manchester. I am not, however, in the spinning cotton yarn trade.

1546. Are you aware of what the disproportion of the wages between weavers and cotton spinners is; are you aware what a cotton spinner will earn per week?—I should think he could earn as much more as a weaver; but I could not positively speak to that; perhaps twice as much. I think he could earn 1 *l.* a week.

1547. Do you know what a calico printer would earn?—They get very good wages just now. I hear calico printers complain of having to pay such wages; it is owing, they say, to combination; and they say it injures the calico trade very much.

1548. In your opinion, has the high wages paid to cotton spinners, and to the printers of calicoes, a detrimental effect upon the wages of the weavers?—As to the cotton spinners my opinion is, they are not paid too high wages. I do not think they are, because they live in an atmosphere that I think it is only a very few years they can live, and if they were not able to make something more than mere necessaries those few years, of course their families would go to ruin when they would be past their labour; but as to the printers, I have heard it rather complained they make more than a proportion when compared with the others; and so far as the cost of any article is too high, of course it will operate upon the sale of that article, because if an article is too high, people will try to substitute some other article rather than use it.

1549. Supposing that you mass the wages of the three classes, that is, the fine cotton spinner, the fine weaver, and the printer who finishes the goods; it would be, of course, all the same to the manufacturer how he paid, but would not the weaver have a more comfortable subsistence if those wages were averaged?—Certainly; anything that would add to his wages would be for his advantage; but whether it would operate advantageously to the general trader I do not know. Anything that would add to the wages of the weaver, that, of course, would be better for him; but I do not see how it could operate on the general trade, only on the general principle, that if the cost of any article be too high, it will operate against the sale of it.

1550. Have you any document that you wish to put in?—No, I think not. There is one thing I should like very much to add, and that is, I think it is a general feeling among the manufacturers at Belfast, that anything that can be done to improve the condition of the weavers, they would wish it to be done, except a law that might have a tendency to give an advantage to the foreign manufacturer, which they are convinced would ultimately injure the weavers; but anything that could

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be done to improve their condition would be the greatest satisfaction to most of the manufacturers.

1551. Have you anything further to state?—Nothing further. It just strikes me that it might be no harm to state this, that I am convinced that no foreign power can ever beat the manufacturers of the United Kingdom out of the general market, if they only bring their energies to bear on the question. The great difficulty is, to get the British manufacturers and merchants to come to this point, that it is possible they may be beaten, and act as if they felt that. I would further state, that so far as I am concerned, and I know it is the opinion of some two or three respectable manufacturers, that it would be of advantage to the trade if a scale of wages could be agreed upon amongst themselves. Perhaps the honourable Committee will allow me further to state this: as far as I have been able to converse with the Belfast manufacturers, they feel, and the weavers also feel most strongly, that if any attempt at the formation of a board be made by legislative enactment; that if the boards of Manchester and Glasgow be allowed to dictate the wages for the north of Ireland, it will be ruinous to the cotton-trade, and to the weavers.

Martis, 7° die Aprilis, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. *Alexander Moncrieffe*, called in; and further Examined.

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1552. HAVE you anything to add to the evidence you gave yesterday?—Perhaps it will be necessary for me to state some of the disadvantages under which the cotton trade of Belfast labours, as compared with the cotton trade of Manchester and Glasgow. The first is, the small capital that the manufacturers generally have; the second is, that the manufacturers in those places generally confine themselves to one or two articles, perhaps to one article; whereas the Belfast manufacturers have to manufacture 30 or 40 different kinds, including breadths and fabrics; not 30 or 40 distinct articles, but a number of different fabrics of goods, and different breadths of goods; and a man who has his attention divided between a great number of articles, of course cannot produce any one article so well as if he were confined merely to that one article. Another disadvantage under which we labour, in consequence of the number of fabrics that we make is, that we cannot get the goods bleached so cheaply as the Scotch and English manufacturers can do. We perhaps, in some instances, pay 20 per cent. more for bleaching; I do not think that is to be attributed to any fault of the bleacher, but simply to the fact that they cannot get such quantities as will enable them to bleach on the Glasgow terms, seeing that the Manchester and Glasgow manufacturers can give their bleachers so much greater quantities to do.

1553. Is the bleaching at Belfast done by chemical process, the same as it is in Lancashire?—Yes, it is. Cotton yarn also cannot generally be purchased on such advantageous terms as can be done by English and Scotch manufacturers, as the quantities required of it are so much less in the one case than in the other.

1554. Is that all?—I think that is all. I thought it right to state what I have done on these points, in order that the Committee may see precisely the circumstances in which we are placed.

1555. Having stated that the wages are higher at Glasgow and Manchester than at Belfast, generally speaking, how does it happen that there is not a general tendency in the weavers at Belfast to go to a higher labour market?—A feeling of love of country will sometimes operate to cause them not to leave their own country. Another reason is, they can live cheaper at Belfast, or in the country, than they can over at Glasgow or Manchester.

1556. The weavers at Belfast are, generally speaking, Irishmen?—Most of them are; I do not think the English or Scotch would come there to weave; the weavers generally in Belfast are not so well circumstanced for houses, looms and tackling, as they are in Glasgow and Manchester.

1557. But the Committee understood you to say yesterday, that considerable capital had been transferred from Glasgow to Belfast, to obviate the effects of the trades' unions?—I think that was the chief cause of it. There is one point which the Committee may deem important; I think trades' unions are not likely to exist to any extent in Belfast, for this reason: there is so much political difference between

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between the men, that they cannot permanently co-operate together; for instance, there are a number of men Roman-catholics, and a number Protestants; suppose there was a mandate to come from the unions to a Roman-catholic (supposing an union to exist in Belfast), he would consider the mandate of his priest to be paramount in authority and importance to the mandate of the other. Well, suppose it were to come to an Orangeman; he is, I think, morally bound to obey the injunctions of the grand lodge, and therefore he would consider that paramount to the trades' unions; so that these conflicting principles operate in a way that trades' unions are not likely to exist to any great extent in Belfast.

1558. You consider an Orangeman bound to obey the injunctions of the lodge?—I think he would do it; I will not say what he is imperatively bound to do, but I think he would be inclined to do it.

1559. Then the weavers in Belfast are a good deal divided between Catholics and Protestants?—Yes.

1560. The Catholics have a number more holidays; does that make much difference to weavers?—I do not think they have any holidays in Belfast.

1561. Do the Catholics give up their holidays?—They do; they even work Good Friday; I believe they keep no day entirely, except Christmas-day.

1562. They would not have a fair chance with the other weavers if they did not?—No.

Mr. *Joseph C. Milner*, called in; and further Examined.

Mr. *J. C. Milner.*

1563. YOU have a more correct statement, drawn from your books, to put in, with reference to the wages paid to weavers?—I have.

1564. Have you received that from Huddersfield since you were last examined?—From my partner.

1565. Will you be good enough to state the contents of it? there was a list of questions given to you; have you got that?—No, I have not.

1566. What was the first question?—The first question was the gross amount of wages for the whole number of weavers for one whole year, ending last September, and the answer to that is, the number of weavers that have wove during the whole year is 189, the gross amount of wages amounting to 5,395 *l.* 9 *s.* 10 ½ *d.*

1567. Are those persons above 18 years of age, or above 14?—It includes that quantity of full-grown weavers.

1568. What do you call full-grown?—I mean above 18 years of age.

1569. Men exclusively?—Men exclusively.

1570. What was the gross number of weavers you stated?—From 200 to 300.

1571. What does that average for men?—It averages 28 *l.* 10 *s.* 11 ½ *d.* per weaver per annum, and is equal to 11 *s.* per week. That includes every description of weaver, good, bad and indifferent. It includes all holidays, regular or occasional.

1572. Have these men been employed all through the year?—Been employed through the year. I stated that if any weavers had only been employed a part of the time, it would be better to leave them out; if they had been set on in the course of the year and had only worked part of the year, if they had only wove three or six months, it could not have been included in the statement of the whole year.

1573. How long were the others employed which are not contained in that account?—I do not know, I have no account of them.

1574. Do you know whether they were not employed in consequence of a slackness of work, or whether they were employed by other people?—No, I mean that they should only exclude those that might have been previously set to work between those periods; that is all.

1575. But is there not a complaint among the weavers that they have not full work throughout the year generally?—If that is the case, they will of course complain.

1576. Then you selected out of your books only those that happen to have been engaged throughout the whole year?—When I say engaged, I mean that they were employed for us, with the regular losses of time that happen among our weavers; that is all.

1577. Were those persons who are excluded from that account employed by other people?—I do not know that one is excluded; but I stated in my letter, if any weaver had been set on during the year, they would not form part of the amount, and therefore it would be better to leave them out; that is all.

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1578. But you stated the gross amount of weavers amount to nearly 300; that is only an account of 189?—No; those weaving plain fabrics are left out.

1579. And those are the ones that are worse paid?—Yes. They have given me also a list of 10 weavers of each description of work in succession, and the average amount of wages of each description of weaver.

1580. Do you happen to know of any masters, who in giving out pieces to work, demand a larger amount of work than the usual admeasurement?—I am not aware of such a thing.

1581. For instance, do you know of any masters, who, when they give out work, demand 46 inches to the yard instead of 36?—No; previous to the time of paying by the hank, there had been some complaints about yards, which led to the principle of paying by the hank.

1582. Was it a prevalent mode of having work done?—By the yard, previous to that time it was.

1583. Then if a weaver was working by the yard, and had to work a larger yard than common, he in fact was receiving so much less wages than he appeared to do?—Yes.

1584. Was it a prevalent habit that, do you know?—It was considered by the weavers to exist to some extent.

1585. You know that it did exist to your own knowledge?—I certainly do not know such a thing, but there were a variety of misunderstandings from these circumstances; pieces that would measure out of the looms such a length, would sometimes measure so much more when they were finished, and, *per contra*, those that measured so much when they came out of the loom, would measure so much less when they were finished; and a deal of the misunderstandings have arisen from those two circumstances.

1586. Are you in partnership with anybody?—Yes, our firm is Joshua Wood & Sons.

1587. Do the partners attend generally to the business, or is one department allotted to one partner and another to the other?—We attend generally to the business both of us.

1588. But is one part of the business confined to one partner?—Generally, except when we happen to be from home.

1589. What is your department?—My department is the arrangement of the patterns.

1590. Do you attend yourself to the book-keeping, principally?—We have a book-keeper; we keep one besides.

1591. Do you happen ever to have visited these weavers in their own houses?—Occasionally.

1592. Or made a practice of it?—Not often.

1593. You do not know their condition from actual examination?—I know their condition from their general appearance when they bring the work in.

1594. Do you know any instance of their being without furniture and without clothes?—No, I am not aware of any such thing.

1595. Did you ever hear of weavers borrowing clothes and shoes to deliver their work in?—No.

1596. Do you know what sort of food they live on chiefly?—Not generally.

1597. How far have the weavers generally to carry their work?—The great bulk of our weavers live within two miles; we have a number that live nearly 10 miles distant.

1598. Have they 10 miles then to come and deliver in their work?—Yes.

1599. Are they paid for the day they deliver in their work?—No; they have the same wages as others; it is matter of choice whether they take the work or not.

1600. Is the work generally taken in one name?—If one weaver has three or four persons weaving with him, he gives in the separate name of every individual, the separate name is given in of every individual, and that individual is responsible for the work as well as the master.

1601. Then if a certain quantity of work is given out to an individual weaver, do you know whether that work is worked up by that individual weaver, or whether he gets two or three to work it up?—We have every reason to believe it is worked generally by the weaver to whom we give it, for we require him personally to come in with the piece.

1602. But is it not quite possible for him to come in with the piece, to receive it

it in the first instance and bring it back at the time, and yet may have got two or three other individuals to help him?—Yes.

1603. Then is there any statement entered into your book of the fact of whether that piece is worked up by one person or by two or three?—No.

1604. Then are the wages entered in the name of that one individual?—Of that one individual.

1605. Then the wages entered in the name of that individual may be the wages of two or three individuals?—It may be so in particular cases. If a weaver were ill, he might get another weaver to weave his work; it sometimes would be a convenience to us; it might be so.

1606. And he might also, without being ill, work part himself, and get others to work a part?—Yes, he might.

1607. So that, in fact, the account you have given in might be an account of the wages of a great many weavers in one?—It might be so; *per contra*, he might leave the loom, or leave our work for a number of days and work for some other persons. We have no control over him, because he is out of sight.

1608. What is the average employment during the year of the weavers, generally speaking?—I could not speak to that.

1609. Is it more than eight months out of 12?—I should think it is; perhaps nine.

1610. What is the time of the year when they are most employed?—December and January are two of the slackest months in the year.

1611. Are they the slackest in foreign trade?—For either foreign or home; it is when the season changes from dark to light goods.

1612. But is it not a fact that the busiest time for the foreign trade is in the winter months?—No, not with our goods, as far as my experience goes.

1613. Nor is it the fact that the busiest time for the home trade is in the summer months?—No.

1614. If it should be stated that weavers are as badly off now as they were in 1829, should you conceive that to be a true or an untrue statement?—I think they are better off than they were in 1829; that is my conviction, with us, because it is since that period that the rise took place to which I alluded in my former evidence.

1615. What sort of goods require the best work?—All those articles that are wove by machines require the best workmen.

1616. Looms or machines?—By machines; I mean in a machine in addition to the loom to work figures.

1617. Does not the best plain work require as good work as the fine?—There is no work making that would require as good work as the figured work; no description of plain work that we are making.

1618. You do not happen to know how often they consume butchers' meat, these weavers?—Not at all.

1619. Now, in the fancy trade, have they frequently to go backwards and forwards for patterns, and warp and weft?—They have.

1620. That takes away from their wages?—Yes; but that time is included in the statement that I have given.

1621. Do the weavers keep books to enter their work in?—Not our weavers.

1622. Did they use to do that before 1829?—When we kept a regular account with them, and paid their wages in that sort of way, they did keep corresponding accounts; we now pay them the full amount of pounds, shillings and pence for every piece as they bring it in, keeping no account with the warehouse.

1623. Was it not the practice before 1829 that the weavers kept books?—I think it is about that period since we made the alteration.

1624. Was there no effort on the part of the masters to discountenance that practice of the weavers keeping books of wages?—None by us; we found by experience that our weavers got into debt in good times, and they frequently set up in bad ones. We were, therefore, satisfied it was no use to advance them money, and that it would be better to have the account settled at the end of every piece.

1625. Did you ever take an average of wages from a weaver's own book for years, deducting his outgoings for wear and tear?—No; our weavers' book was always a copy of ours, because they took from us after the pieces were measured, and entered them in their own book.

 1626. You

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1626. You have stated you do not know the quantity of weavers in your district, the district of Huddersfield?—No.

1627. Are you ignorant of a return made by the unions in 1833?—I know nothing of the circumstance.

1628. You never heard that the amount was 20,000?—No.

1629. Nor you never heard that those 20,000 were divided into the woollen-cloth manufactory and the fancy manufactory?—No.

1630. The wages of the valencia weavers you said might be taken at from 13*s.* to 20*s.*?—I did; and though the average is by no means equal to that, yet our friends state, that the average of that description of good weavers, that we pay 1*s.* 8*d.* a dozen to, earn from 19*s.* to 21*s.* per week.

1631. Then if there was a statement made that the wages of the valencia weavers was only from 6*s.* to 15*s.* a week, you would consider that not a fair statement?—From 6*s.* to 15*s.* As to the general average throughout the country, I could not speak to it; it is below what we conceive an average.

1632. You have stated they are 11*s.* with you?—Yes, that includes, as I said before, every description of weavers, good, bad and indifferent; it takes in all holidays, regular and occasional; all times of sickness, whether for themselves or for their families; for if a family is very ill, they are obliged to stop the loom.

1633. Is a new article frequently introduced; a new fashion?—Frequently.

1634. Does that give a temporary advantage to the weaver?—No, it is rather a disadvantage than otherwise; a frequent change, as I stated before, is a disadvantage rather than otherwise to the weaver.

1635. But is it not an advantage to the more ingenious class of weavers, upon whom must mainly depend the power of accomplishing that fabric?—The change of pattern may not be more difficult to make when the change has taken place; it is the time spent in changing from one article to another that is a disadvantage.

1636. Are you not obliged to apply to the best workman, and is he not paid according to the difficulty?—Yes, we must apply to the best workman in such cases.

1637. Then though it is an advantage to the more ingenious class of weavers, it is only a temporary one?—Only a temporary one.

1638. What was the next question that was put?—I do not recollect; I sent the copy home, and they did not return me a copy of the questions.

1639. What is the answer?—The statement I have is an arrangement of 10 weavers in succession for three months, of three different classes of work. The first 10 weavers in three months earned 94*l.* 19*s.* 4½*d.*, and that is equal to an average of 14*s.* 8*d.* per week; it would be well to say at 1*s.* 8*d.* per dozen.

1640. That is the best workmen of that class?—Yes; the second class is 10 successive weavers for three months at 1*s.* 7*d.* per dozen; 79*l.* 19*s.* 3½*d.*, or 12*s.* 3*d.* the average each per week.

1641. Is that an easier fabric to work, because there is a difference of a penny a dozen in it?—The first class of work is a larger kind of machinery.

1642. Now the third?—The third class is 10 weavers, consisting of women and children. The amount is 50*l.* 0*s.* 7*d.*, averaging 7*s.* 8½*d.* per week each weaver.

1643. Which is the most numerous class of these three?—The two first.

1644. Are the most numerous?—Yes.

1645. They do not include women and children?—No, they do not.

1646. Do not women and children work in them?—No, they do not.

1647. The women and children work in the last?—Yes.

1648. Children of what age?—From 14 to 18 years of age; they would not be under 14.

1649. What is the last?—The answer to the last question is, the pieces being so irregular in length and in price for weaving, we find it impossible to give a correct statement; but the number wove in that year, that is in the year the gross amount stated was 3,749, which on the amount paid for weaving they average 1*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.* per piece: it was asked what was the rate per piece; but a piece varies exceedingly, from 12 and 15 yards to 30 yards.

1650. But at that rate, what would be the wages per week of the weaver?—The gross amount of wages show what the rate is altogether.

1651. Was there any other?—That is all.

1652. Have you no putters out of work?—My brother puts out.

1653. Because you mentioned that the weaver had to bring his work to the factory?—Yes.

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1654. But are there no persons who bring it home from the weavers except the individuals themselves?—No, the individuals themselves.

1655. Do not you know it is the custom among very poor people to borrow cloaks and other garments when going a distance out from home?—I am not aware of such a thing.

1656. Who is the person in your firm that particularly superintends the hand-loom weaving?—Take in the work? My brother-in-law, Mr. John Wood.

1657. Why was not he here instead of yourself?—That arose accidentally; he was not at the meeting, and I was.

1658. Does your recollection carry you as far back as the time of the Luddites?—Yes.

1659. What was the condition of the weavers in those days compared to the present?—I think rather better on the whole than now, though provisions were a much higher price.

1660. Do you remember the year when the Luddites prevailed?—Yes.

1661. What year was that?—I think it was 1815 or 1816; it is so long since that I cannot recollect exactly.

1662. But taking into account the high price of provisions, do you still think weavers were rather better off then than they are now?—I think they were as well. I remember being down at Scarborough at that period, and as far as my recollection will carry me, the general rate of wages among the cloth weavers did not exceed 1 *l.* 1 *s.* a-week; and I believe corn was as high as 7 *s.* a stone within a year or two of that period.

1663. Then had they constant employment in those days?—I could not speak positively to that fact.

1664. Had they more constant employment than they have now?—I think they had; there is more changing now; the difficulty with us is the constant changing; we formerly could have wrought for two or three years the same pattern with very little change, and now there are perhaps two changes a year, and the expense is very great in changing the work, on many occasions; it is a very serious difficulty, and that difficulty increases every year.

1665. That is because you manufacture a fancy article, and fashion changes?—Yes.

1666. According to the statement that you have given in, the average wages are about 11 *s.* a week; do you wish the Committee to understand that is the rate of wages that a man has received?—I mean to say that it is the whole average upon that quantity of weaving, taking in every description of weavers, good, bad and indifferent, taking all the time they lose for everything, either in doing other work or in holidays, or loss of time occasioned by sickness or otherwise.

1667. You stated that there were generally three months in the year when there is no employment; that there were nine months in the year when they are fully employed?—I stated that two months, December and January, were often the slackest months in the year; I mean to say slacker than others, but I do not mean to say they are totally out of employment.

1668. The question put to you was, whether it was not the fact that only eight months out of 12 they were fully employed, and you said you thought they were fully employed about nine months?—Yes, I think that would be near the truth; but it is irregular; one manufacturer may be fully employed when another is very slack.

1669. The Committee wish to know, with reference to this average amount of 11 *s.* per week, whether those parties were fully employed throughout the year, or whether they had these three months?—They were not fully employed. There are two seasons of the year when they have a change from one thing to another, that they frequently have to stand for a few days.

1670. Would those few days amount, in reference to these men, to two months in the course of the year?—It might in some extreme cases. But I am aware the accidental difference between one weaver and another, in consequence of accidental circumstances, arising out of the situation in which they may be placed, varies the quantity of wages very considerably sometimes.

1671. What is the reason that those parties who are left out; there are about 100 left out of that account; what was the reason they were not so fully employed during the year as to enter into that statement?—I wished them to give me the gross amount of wages, both plain and figured; they have not given the plain weavers, except 10 of them.

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1672. And those plain weavers, you stated, are the lowest paid?—Yes; there are 10 of them stated in regular succession.

1673. You stated that there was great variation in patterns; have you in your town professional artists who make patterns?—No.

1674. Are the patterns invented by yourselves, among the master manufacturers?—Occasionally we purchase patterns from artists.

1675. Established in your town?—No, not established in our town; we have generally persons who go about the country.

1676. The artists who supply your market are mostly itinerant artists?—Yes; there are none in the neighbourhood; I saw an advertisement in the paper several weeks back for a person of that description.

1677. What do you pay for the pattern?—It varies exceedingly.

1678. But what is the highest price you have paid?—We have given as high as 5*s*.

1679. Do not you think it would be of great importance to the fancy trade if there was a greater variety of patterns, and you had more means of getting superior productions?—If there was proper talent employed in the designing of the pattern in the first instance, there would be a less amount of money expended in the making of patterns.

1680. Then you are not at all concerned in the book department in your firm?—Not at present; I have kept them for a number of years, but not at present.

1681. How long have you left off book-keeping?—Since one of our partners died (Mr. Samuel Wood,) we have had a book-keeper.

1682. How long is that since?—I cannot state the year; about 1822 or 1823.

Jovis, 9° die Aprilis, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Robert Gardner, Esq., called in; and Examined.

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1683. WHERE do you reside?—At Manchester.

1684. In what line of business are you?—Manufacturer and spinner.

1685. Are you connected with hand-loom weaving?—Altogether.

1686. What is the state of hand-loom weaving at Manchester at present?—Better than it has been for the last two or three years.

1687. When did the improvement begin?—The early part of October or November last.

1688. Do you attribute that improvement to any particular cause?—No, any further than the demand has been greater.

1689. Is it an export demand or home?—Principally export, I should say; an American demand. It is the time of year they purchase; and from the peculiar state of their finances last year they did not purchase the usual quantity, and I think have purchased more than the usual quantity this season.

1690. You think their demand was less, in consequence of what took place with reference to the bank of the United States?—Yes.

1691. Do you think that improvement is likely to be continued?—Yes.

1692. Then was the demand from America merely the demand of the particular season?—It is always so; it is only in particular seasons they purchase. They purchase for their spring shipments in December and January, principally.

1693. Do you think the demand for the spring shipments this year is greater than it was three years ago?—I really cannot speak to that; I think it is.

1694. You do not expect it will be so good next spring?—I hope it will.

1695. Are the wages of the weavers higher, in consequence of this late improvement, than they were last year?—I think they are on the whole; I think weavers' wages, generally speaking, are higher than what they were the early part of last year.

1696. Have

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1696. Have the wages of the weavers been often reduced during your experience, for the same sort of work?—They fluctuate very much indeed.

1697. Is there any difference in the wages now paid by the manufacturers of Manchester?—They vary very much; almost every separate manufacturer will vary more or less. Though they make the same reed, and the particular article goes by the same name, yet there are inferior and superior manufacturers.

1698. When wages have been reduced, do the manufacturers generally approve of the reduction?—I do not think they do. The reduction in wages generally begins with the smaller manufacturers, who have not sufficient capital to carry them over a flat season; and of course, being compelled to sell, they sell at the best price they can, and when that is the case it is always a flat season, and there is more labour in the market than is required, therefore they reduce the wages.

1699. Is it the fact that the hand-loom weavers generally find their own looms?—Yes.

1700. The manufacturers furnishing the raw material?—Yes; the weaver finds the loom and the shuttle, the manufacturer finds the warp, weft, heels and the reed through which the web is woven.

1701. Have the profits of the manufacturers of late been good?—Not of the hand-loom manufacturers.

1702. Is it in consequence of the want of profit that the smaller capitalist has been disabled to compete with the larger manufacturers: the larger capitalist can afford to wait longer for a demand?—Whenever there is a flat season, and not an every-week demand, the smaller manufacturers are compelled to sell, and they sell on the best terms they can. The large manufacturers are not compelled to sell; they can hold their stocks over; and the market generally will recover in the course of a short time.

1703. That will be the case with all trades, will it not?—Yes.

1704. Do you think it is in consequence of a want of profit that the smaller capitalists have been obliged to reduce the wages?—Yes, decidedly so.

1705. Can a small number of manufacturers in your district, by beginning a reduction of wages, cause the reduction to be general?—It frequently occurs when things are flat, and there is but little demand for labour, that a small manufacturer, who has been compelled to sell his stock at less than cost, will say to weavers when they apply for work, "I do not want to make cloth, but as you are so very much in want of it, I will give you work at such a price," perhaps 20 per cent. lower than the regular price, and the weaver will frequently take it, under the conviction that half a loaf is better than no bread; and then another small manufacturer perhaps hears of this reduction and he reduces also, and so it goes on till it ultimately reaches the larger manufacturer and brings the whole down.

1706. Do you think it really advantageous to the weaver that he should go on that principle of taking for a temporary season this half loaf instead of no bread?—I think not.

1707. You think it would be better to curtail the hours of labour than reduce the wages?—It would be better if he had only partial work, because then the market would recover itself. But if a man takes work out at a lower price, he tries to do more, or ought to try to do more work, and that of course adds fuel to the fire; it increases instead of decreases stocks.

1708. Then you think an adverse state of trade may tend to increase production?—No doubt it does for a time.

1709. Then a great supply of goods is no proof of prosperity?—Certainly not.

1710. Do either those who first reduce or those who follow their example derive any benefit by such courses?—Certainly not; every one has equally the privilege of reducing; and if one man reduces to-day, another can reduce to-morrow; there is, therefore, no advantage, but a disadvantage to the large stockholder; he suffers the most, because it reduces the value of his stock on hand.

1711. Then the large holders of stock are interested in sustaining the rate of wages?—No question about it.

1712. Did you state that the manufacturers who took the lead in reducing wages were those who were the smaller capitalists?—Generally speaking it is so; I never knew of an instance of large houses being the first to reduce wages.

1713. Are those who are averse to reducing wages governed and controlled by those who reduce wages?—To a certain extent they are; as I stated before, one

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manufacturer will reduce, another will follow him; and one will follow the other till at last it becomes general.

1714. Would it be a benefit to the manufacturer and the weaver if some plan could be devised to raise wages and make the rate more uniform than it now is?—I do not think it would.

1715. Why?—Because if any plan were adopted to raise wages, it would increase the quantity of labour instead of diminishing it; our wages are low in consequence of the over-supply of labour; hand-loom wages being advanced would lessen the demand for that labour: I conceive the principal competition is from the power-loom.

1716. You think the power-loom one main ingredient in the cause of the reduction of the hand-loom weaver's wages?—No question about it; there cannot I think be two opinions about it.

1717. Does the power-loom affect every species of hand-loom weaving?—Not hitherto, because there is every year a very great demand for those fabrics on which the power-looms are at present employed, therefore no power-loom weaver has occasion to look about for any fresh fabric. But at this present moment there is every prospect of being a very large increase of power-looms, that I think the fabrics that are at present worked by power-looms will be overdone, and every power-loom weaver will be led to look upon what other fabrics he can bring the power-loom to bear upon; and I would give it as my decided opinion, that three-fourths of all the various fabrics of cloths woven at present by hand-loom weavers may be woven by power.

1718. Do you mean by power, as it now exists, without any added improvements?—There are improvements in power-looms almost every week; and I think one-half at least of the whole of the different fabrics now wove by hand will be wove by power-looms, either as they at present exist, or by other machinery.

1719. That is by machinery propelled by other power than hand-power?—Yes.

1720. When did this reduction in hand-loom weaver's wages begin?—It has fluctuated very much ever since I have known anything of the trade; since the year 1812 or 1813. The wages since that time have been very much up and down.

1721. What year did they begin to be up?—I really cannot speak to the year.

1722. About what time?—I should think about 22 to 24 years ago wages were four or five times as high as they are at present.

1723. The Committee understood you to say wages had been up at some particular period since 1815, that is to say, there had been a fall in wages, and then a rise?—They have varied much in that period, but not so much as previous to 1812.

1724. Will you state the commencement of the period at which they were four or five times as high as they are now?—About 1812 and 1813 they were highest.

1725. Had the power-loom then come into competition with the hand-loom?—I think not; if it had, it was about the time of its being introduced.

1726. About 1815 or 1816?—Yes; I cannot speak to it exactly, but I think it was about that time that it was introduced.

1727. Can you speak to the period when power-loom, or any machinery other than power-loom, came into competition with the hand-loom?—It has been gradually coming in for many years; power-loom weaving has been gradually increasing.

1728. But is it not the fact, that the power-loom did not come very much into competition with the hand-loom till after 1820?—It was after that period considerably that the power-loom has come into competition with the hand-loom to injure it much.

1729. Then there must have been some other cause than the power-loom which caused a reduction in 1815 or 1816?—I dare say there was; the cotton trade, ever since I have known anything of it, has been a very fluctuating business.

1730. But in the wages of hand-loom weavers there has been rather a gradual fall than any fluctuation?—No, they have risen and fallen frequently in that period.

1731. Is it not a fact that the hand-loom weavers, with whom the power-loom does come into competition, are rather better off just now than the hand-loom weavers, with whom the power-loom does not come into competition?—I do not think

think so, although there is not much difference in that respect; the hand-loom weavers that are upon an inferior cloth to what is generally made by the power-loom weavers, are as well off as any at the present. There is the greatest advance in wages in a class that are termed the first quality of seventy-fours; that is the first quality of cloth wove below the general average of what is produced by power; the wages of those, I think, in 1828 and 1829, were as low as 1 *s.* 1 ½ *d.*, and they are now getting 2 *s.* for the same description. It is that class of cloth that they are reducing the wages of at this time; many of the manufacturers have reduced 1 ½ *d.* a-piece, some few have reduced 3 *d.* a-piece. I know only one house (a large maker) that has not reduced at all; but upon inquiry, I learnt on the 1st of October they had no stock whatever on hand. On Monday when I called upon them, they had a stock of 65,000 pieces, and they stated they should not reduce for this week or perhaps next; but if there was no appearance of any improvement, they should come down 3 *d.* at once.

1732. The wages of the same men having been two years ago 13 ½ *d.*?—More than that; it was in 1828 and 1829 that it was 1 *s.* 1 ½ *d.*; I think the early part of last year it was about 1 *s.* 6 *d.*

1733. Then is it in consequence of the same cause you attributed the improvement of trade to, namely, the demand from America?—Yes.

1734. Is that a cloth with which the power-loom comes into competition?—Some people make the same cloth by power, and I have no doubt the power-loom is capable of making that cloth very much cheaper and better than it can be made by the hand.

1735. Can you account for how those hand-loom weavers with whom the power-loom does come into competition can be in a worse condition than those weavers with whom the power-loom does not come into competition?—They change a good deal, and when one class of cloth is not so well paid, they frequently will go to another.

1736. But still the departments of business remain the same; there are some departments of weaving with which the power-loom cannot come into competition?—It does not, at present.

1737. Can you at all account for those departments of the trade with which the power-loom cannot come into competition not being in a better state than the hand-loom weavers with whom the power-loom does come into competition?—I think the fancy goods, which the power-loom would have the greatest difficulty in competing with, are perhaps better paid than those it does more easily compete with.

1738. Then, if the competition of power-loom with hand-loom be one main ingredient in the cause of the reduction of the wages of the hand-loom weavers, they ought to be much worse off than those weavers with whom power-loom does not come into competition?—No, because if one description of work is paid lower than another, they then fly to other sorts; weavers can weave various descriptions of cloth; if one thing is badly paid, there is something perhaps within his reach that is better paid, and he goes to that.

1739. Then do you mean to say weavers with whom the power-loom does come into competition depart out of that trade and go among the weavers with whom the power-loom does not come into competition?—Yes, to a certain extent they do.

1740. And that increases the supply of labour in that particular department?—Yes.

1741. Is it a fact within your knowledge that the weavers in the department of the weaving trade with which power-loom does not come into competition have increased within late years?—Yes, they must have increased, because such a very great proportion of the various fabrics that were formerly wove by hand, are wove altogether by power at present. I apprehend fustians, which at one time employed a great many, I cannot speak exactly to the number, perhaps 6,000, or 7,000, or 8,000 hand-loom weavers; and I should think, of course I speak very much at guess, but I should think there are not 200 hand-loom fustian weavers now in the whole county of Lancashire. I spoke to a gentleman interested in the trade, on Saturday, from Heywood: he stated formerly they had about 3,000 hand-loom fustian weavers; then I pressed him very much to guess at the quantity now. I said "Do you think there are 20 now?" and he said "I can tell you one thing; I should be sorry to be compelled to find six before I go to bed."

1742. Since what period has that taken place?—No particular period; it has been a gradual thing: the manufacturers found it profitable to employ the power-loom

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loom weavers, and they have increased, and perhaps there has been a greater or less increase in power-loom every week for the last seven years.

1743. What do you conceive is the number of hand-loom weavers in Manchester and the suburbs?—I really can form no idea; they are very much reduced. I would take a district, which is Stockport, Ashton, Dukinfield, Staley Bridge, Hyde, Oldham, and Heywood. The principal part of the manufacture of muslin, with which I am more principally acquainted, was carried on in Ashton and Stockport. We ourselves, in the neighbourhood of the above two towns, had 10 or 12 years ago about 1,000 to 1,500 weavers. We gave it up and removed to Preston, and now almost the whole of the hand-loom weavers are employed on other things.

1744. Is that at Stockport?—At Stockport, Ashton, Dukinfield, Staley Bridge Hyde, Oldham and Heywood; that is, on the south-east and east, and the north-east of Manchester. There are a very few hand-loom weavers indeed there now.

1745. Could you give any estimate of the number?—I could not.

1746. How many weavers do you employ now?—About 4,500.

1747. You stated the rate per piece at which they were receiving wages for a particular kind of work; can you give any estimate how much your weavers on an average earn per week?—They vary very much, inasmuch as children are weavers; they begin to weave at ten; many of their wives weave, who have to attend to the housework, and many that have families perhaps do not go to the loom sometimes for a fortnight or three weeks, or a month, and various other people have recourse to weaving when they have no other employment, that the wages vary very much.

1748. Take the average of men who work pretty steadily and who are perhaps 17 or 18 years of age, what do they earn per week?—I should think that men that would weave 60 hours a week (good weavers) may get from 10*s.* to 13*s.*

1749. Is that in the fancy or the plain?—In either fancy or plain.

1750. Can they make as much at plain as fancy?—In the finer description of plain they may.

1751. Have you any statement of wages to give in?—Yes, here is a statement of wages which was taken out of the book in which we keep the weavers' accounts:—

Years.		Total Earnings of 20 successive Weeks.	Number of Weavers.	Earnings per Week.	Earnings per Week for One Weaver.
		£. s. d.		£. s. d.	£. s. d.
1833	Earnings of 5 average weavers at Blackburn -	38 1 8	5	1 18 1	– 7 7
1834	— 5 — - - —	40 8 4	5	2 – 5	– 8 1
1830	— 4 — - - Preston -	31 18 10	4	1 11 11	– 7 11¾
1831	— 4 — - - —	25 18 6	4	1 5 11	– 6 5¾
1832	— 4 — - - —	28 6 6	4	1 8 3	– 7 –¾
1833	— 4 — - - —	29 7 9	4	1 9 4	– 7 4
1834	— 4 — - - —	28 – 9	4	1 8 –	– 7 –
1831	— 4 — (colour) { Bamber Bridge. }	32 1 6	4	1 12 1	– 8 –
1832	— 4 — — —	38 7 3	4	1 18 4	– 9 7
1833	— 4 — — —	31 1 3	4	1 11 –	– 7 9
1834	— 4 — — —	34 2 8½	4	1 14 1	– 8 6
1831	— 8 — (white) —	61 2 6	8	3 1 1	– 7 7½
1832	— 8 — — —	65 18 6	8	3 5 11	– 8 2
1833	— 8 — — —	64 19 3	8	3 4 11	– 8 1½
1834	— 8 — — —	62 5 4½	8	3 2 3	– 7 9¼
1830	— 4 — - - Chorley	31 7 –	4	1 11 4	– 7 10
1831	— 4 — - - —	32 13 6	4	1 12 8	– 8 2
1832	— 4 — - - —	36 1 1	4	1 16 –	– 9 –
1833	— 4 — - - —	35 6 6	4	1 15 3	– 8 9¾
1834	— 4 — - - —	44 16 –	4	2 4 9	– 11 2¼

The above are extracted from the Weavers' Book, indiscriminately, men, women and children, to show the average of all on the books.

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1752. Do the families earn anything in addition to the 10*s.* or 13*s.*?—Yes, they all weave.

1753. A man working 60 hours a week earns this sum?—Yes.

1754. What is your firm?—Gardner, Atkinson & Co.

1755. You have not drawn an average?—No; those are just as they rise.

1756. The average here would be about 8*s.*?—Yes; this is also a list which was given to me by Messrs. Horrocks, Jackson & Co., of Preston. They are engaged very extensively in hand-loom weaving. Mr. Jackson has looked this over very particularly himself, and he states that, in going through the book, he has passed over idle dissipated characters. He has not taken the weavers that earn the most, but regular, steady weavers, not including idle and irregular ones:—

STATEMENT OF WEAVERS' WEEKLY EARNINGS.

WEAVERS' NAMES.	PLACE of RESIDENCE.	AGE OF WEAVERS.	Number of Looms.	Number of Weeks taken.	Average per Loom for each Week.
		Years.			*s.* *d.*
Thomas Fenton	Preston	35	1	13	13 2
John Swift	Ditto	40	1	26	9 3
W. Pickering	Ditto	44	1	32	10 3
G. Woodcock	Ditto	40	1	18	8 –
Moses Shaw	Ditto	-	1	17	8 –
H. Fiddler	Ditto	40	1	32	10 2
R. Almond	Ditto	33	1	12	11 –
H. Gardner	Ditto	-	1	22	8 5
J. Bleasdale	Ditto	42	1	18	17 6
C. Bracewell	Ditto	60	1	11	9 4
G. Oldham	Ditto	-	1	9	12 9
Adam Livesey	Ditto	45	1	17	9 11
J. Rothwell	Ditto	65	1	8	8 –
A. Mercer	Ditto	48	1	6	13 9
P. Leeming	Ditto	35	1	2	12 –
J. Haydock	Ditto	30	1	8	11 8
J. Caton	Ditto	46; children 17, 15, 13.	4	11	6 10 per loom, or 27/4 the family.
J. Greenhalgh	Ditto	himself 30; wife 30	2	6	7 – each, or 14/ the man and wife.
W. Greenhuff	Ditto	ditto 35 - ditto 34	2	8	8 5 each, or 16/10 ditto.
R. Sharples	Inglewhite	45	1	5	11 6
Thomas Drinkwater	Ditto	30	1	9	11 5½
Lawrence Richmond	Ditto	55	1	10	7 11
Richard Hall	Bilsborough	25	1	6	9 7
Thomas Hallsall	Longridge	28	1	11	8 8½
Richard Rhodes	Ditto	50	1	9	8 6
J. Wilkinson	Ribchester	50	1	10	8 9
Richard Sharples	Ditto	23	1	8	8 7
Oliver Nuttall	Hothersall	26	1	9	7 8
John Keighley	Whittingham	himself 35 wife 34 lad 11	3	20	6 5 each, or 19/3 the family.
John Rigby	Samlesbury	all young men	4	19	11 3½ each, or 45/2 the four looms.
Thomas Wilding	Longton	himself 36 wife 35 two children 13, 11	4	13	7 – each, or 28/1 the family.
William Holliday	Myerscough	himself 38 children, 16, 14, 12	4	10	7 6 each, or 30/ the family.
E. Baxton's three sons	Ribbleton	16, 18, 21	3	7	13 – each, or 39/ the three looms.

51 looms. Total weekly earnings, 23*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*; per loom, 9*s.* 3¾*d.* per week.

The same weavers, leaving out the families with young children, will average 10*s.* 7½*d.*

The above weavers are industrious people; the notoriously idle having been passed over when extracting the above from the Weavers' Ledger.

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NOTE of the WAGE which was paid for the following Kinds:

	1820.		1825.		1830.		1835.	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
$\frac{6}{4}$ 50 reed cambrics, 24 yards, 108 picks	8	–	7	–	5	–	5	6
$\frac{6}{4}$ 60 - ditto - - ditto 120 –	9	6	8	6	5	6	6	6
$\frac{6}{4}$ 50 Jaconets - - ditto 108 –	6	–	6	–	4	–	4	–
$\frac{6}{4}$ 60 - ditto - - ditto 136 –	9	–	8	–	5	6	5	9

Extracted from the Weavers' Ledger, 6 April 1835. *Horrocks, Jackson & Co.*

1757. These are the wages of individuals, without the assistance reaped from the work of their families?—Yes.

1758. What their families produce is all additional?—Yes.

1759. What expenses come against these wages?—There is the winding and the sowing to dress the yarn with, if fine numbers, (for coarse numbers they do not dress it now); formerly, when a great deal of the weaving was done by journeymen, the men who employed them found them looms, and wound their weft off a large cop on the shuttle-bobbin; and they charged 3 *d.* in every shilling. If a man earned 12 *s.*, they took 3 *s.* of it, and paid the journeyman 9 *s.* But there are no journeymen to be obtained; all those men that formerly acted as journeymen are now employed on the power-loom. I was going on to state, in connexion with the great falling-off of the hand-loom in a certain district, that, previous to coming up, Mr. Makin, a man who was examined before this Committee last year, called upon me and my manager at Bolton; a man that superintends at Bolton and Chorley, and a good deal round the neighbourhood. They agreed at once in stating neither of them knew an instance of a single new loom having been made for the last 10 years. I do not mean to say there was not such a thing, but both of them having extensive knowledge, neither of them knew an instance of a single new loom being made for the last 10 years. They also agreed in stating, that 25 per cent. of the looms in Bolton were standing and no journeymen can be got; they get better wages by going upon the power-loom. They also agreed that from 10 to 15 per cent. are standing in the neighbourhood of Chorley and Preston, and Blackburn, and other districts.

1760. Explain exactly what you mean by journeymen?—The journeymen are men weavers, but have no loom of their own, and get work where they could; if you take into consideration the quantity of hand-looms that have been destroyed when families have given up weaving, (I have seen at various times a great many broken up); when you take into further consideration the great portion of the hand-looms are idle or destroyed, or not weaving cotton, that were used in the neighbourhood of Ashton and Stockport, and the whole of that district, where it is altogether power now, you will see at once the reduction. It is my decided opinion the hand-loom weaving of cotton goods of the whole county is reduced within the last 10 years one-third. I ought to state, there is a species of hand-loom weaving which is upon the increase; that is what we call dandy-looms.

1761. That is a mixture of power and hand?—Yes; it is all done by the hand; it has a taking-up motion.

1762. Will you state the reason why the dandy-looms are increased in preference to the hand-loom?—Because they make better cloth; it is more regular, and they are made at lower wages. I have got averages here—(*The Witness handed in a Paper containing the average wages*):—

	s.	*d.*
Clear average earnings of five dandy-loom weavers, for 20 weeks together, in the year 1832 - - - - - - - - - -	10	5
For the same number of weavers and days in 1833 - - - -	11	–
For the same number in 1834 - - - - - - - - -	11	3
For the same number of weavers the last 10 weeks in 1834 and first 10 weeks in 1835 - - - - - - - - - -	11	–

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1763. Are

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1763. Are they made at lower wages because the dandy-loom can produce more cloth in a given period than the hand-loom?—Yes, we pay them lower.

1764. You pay them lower per piece?—Yes.

1765. But they can earn as good wages?—Yes, higher wages.

1766. What do they average?—The average is about 10 *s.* to 11 *s.* per week.

1767. The average earnings from the dandy-loom is 10 *s.* or 11 *s.* a week?—Yes.

1768. Are there any deductions to make from these wages?—None whatever.

1769. What amount per week will the deductions which come against the wages of hand-loom be? To what will they reduce it? How many shillings per week on the average?—I would say, in reply to that, when they used to employ journeymen they used to take one quarter off; they used to deduct from the weaver's wages 3 *d.* out of each shilling. The journeyman had everything provided to complete his work with; he had nothing to do but straight-forward weaving; and for all those considerations, for the use of the loom, going to the warehouse and getting the work; and, when it was wove, taking it back, finding sew and lights, and everything of that sort, they took 3 *d.* out of every shilling.

1770. Then supposing the wages of a hand-loom weaver, which on your book appear to be 8 *s.* a week, one-fourth being reduced, that brought them down in reality to 6 *s.*?—Yes; but that is not a fair statement. Those are taken indiscriminately out of the book, and therefore include, perhaps, some young children; for a young boy or a girl will begin to work at 10 years old, or 11 or 12, and they expect exactly the same price for the work, except they make it very bad, as if it were woven by the most experienced weaver.

1771. Are you quite certain, from the statements in your books, that the work which you give out, and which is brought in, is all the produce of one man's work?—It is not always the case; sometimes more than one will work upon it; one giving it out and another finishing it.

1772. Then how do you know what that man earns?—We can tell by what we pay.

1773. Then, in fact, the statement in your book may be fallacious?—I think not; it is a rare occurrence.

1774. If you give out a certain quantity of work, and the man who takes that work has it worked up by part of his family, instead of his having any subsistence in addition to what he apparently has from you, it is, in fact, the joint work of himself and of his family?—No, that is a rare occurrence. I have known, sometimes, a second weaver assist when a piece was wanted to be finished at a given time; but when that has been the case, it has been a high-paid fancy, and done to accommodate the master.

1775. How do you pay weavers?—We pay them by the piece, according to the different qualities of cloth; we have our price, and we pay them accordingly.

1776. Give any of the qualities of cloth you choose to name?—Six-quarter sixty-reed cambric.

1777. How much do you pay a yard or a piece for that?—A six-quarter sixty-reed cambric we pay at present 6 *s.* 9 *d.* for; and I find that Horrocks & Jackson, by that list, pay 6 *s.* 6 *d.*

1778. Twelve yards in the piece?—Twenty-four yards in the piece.

1779. How long will a man take to weave that?—I have thought a piece and a half a man's work; Mr. Jackson gave it as his opinion that a man ought to weave a piece and three-quarters.

1780. That is taking 60 hours a week; 10 hours a day for the six days?—Yes.

1781. Against which one-fourth has to be deducted?—Yes.

1782. You say that there are no new looms making in the district you alluded to, the Bolton district; and that there are 25 per cent. of these standing idle?—Yes.

1783. Now to what work do the weavers apply the labour of their children?—I cannot say; to various: there are a great many employed in the factories.

1784. Then they do not assist them in weaving?—Not when employed in mills.

1785. You say there is an increase in the export trade; is the demand for the export trade chiefly in the winter?—No, it varies; it continues the whole year, one market or another. After the American demand is over, then our home demand commences; after that, our spring demand; then American again, and various

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various others; the East India and China, the Brazils, and to different quarters of the world. It is more or less the whole of the year.

1786. But the American demand, which is the source of the late comparative briskness, is chiefly done in winter?—Yes; they begin and purchase or contract for the goods in November, and they wish to receive them in December and January principally; those are the two months in which they are packed and forwarded.

1787. Then the best time for the employment of the weavers is the time in which the greatest deduction has to be made from his wages in the shape of light?—Certainly; there is as much weaving done, I should fancy, in November and December, January and February, and March, as in the other seven months.

1788. What do you estimate the cost of the lights at per week to a weaver?—I have no idea; I never ascertained the cost.

1789. Do they use gas or oil, or candles?—Principally candles.

1790. You stated, you have no means of forming an estimate of the number of weavers in the district round Manchester; was there not an estimate made by the unions a short time ago?—Not that I am aware of.

1791. You stated you are both a spinner and weaver?—Yes.

1792. When did you commence being a spinner?—About 10 years ago.

1793. Is it a fair question to ask you if you united the two trades because you did not find you got sufficient profit from the one?—I do not know that that was the motive; it is advantageous to combine the two; we spin our own yarn, and we have no more trouble. I suppose we thought there might be some advantage in spinning, seeing our neighbours profit by it.

1794. Has it not become a general practice to unite two or three branches of trade, where one previously sufficed, in order to obtain a profit?—Certainly it has.

1795. Can you give any other reason for the increase of that practice than a diminution of profit?—I do not know how that is; it is rather a proof that there has been a profit, or else they would not have the means of turning spinner, as machinery requires a great outlay; but I conceive it is a part of the business. The fact is, we are at present preparing to go into the power-loom weaving also, from a full conviction that we cannot keep our standing or maintain our connexion if we do not, because a great many fabrics of cloth that have hitherto been manufactured by us by hand, other people are manufacturing by power, and so supplanting us.

1796. They make a better article, do they?—Very much better.

1797. Have you never heard it stated by manufacturers that the reason of their joining two branches of trade was an insufficiency of profit in the one to which previously they had been applying themselves?—I do not know that I have heard it; some years ago spinning was a very good business, previous to 1825; at that time every person was anxious to go into the spinning who had the means.

1798. Have you ever heard of spinners joining to their trade the business of general merchant as well?—I do not think that is general with spinners; sometimes spinners become manufacturers as well as manufacturers become spinners.

1799. Have you never heard it assigned as a cause for their doing that, that they dare not trust their goods out of their own hands, in consequence of the embarrassment of parties who have been connected with that branch?—I do not know; I may have heard that stated; but I think that any statement that people became merchants because they could not trust their property out of their hands is not worthy of much attention.

1800. Will you state if you think it desirable that the power to regulate wages should be possessed by those manufacturers that are averse to reduce wages?—My opinion is, there should be no power at all. I will give the Committee the reason: it is the full and firm conviction of my mind that one half of the hand-loom cotton weavers must find other employment seven years from this time, because they cannot compete with power; they only exist on sufferance now. I stated before that I have no doubt that those gentlemen in the power-loom trade know it has been a very profitable business, in consequence of which there is a probability of a very large increase, and that will drive them on the fabrics that are at present woven by the hand. I feel satisfied that the number of hand-loom weavers must be lessened very much. It is a clear fact that they not only make a very superior article by power, but at a lower price.

1801. But you have stated that those parties who are best able to employ the weavers are the parties most averse to the reduction of wages, and that they are forced

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forced to reduce wages in consequence of the reduction made by the smaller capitalists, that are less able to reduce?—Yes; I do confirm that statement.

1802. And you still think it is a beneficial state of things that that power should exist on the part of the smaller capitalists, to force the higher masters to reduce?—Speaking for myself, I am very much averse to fettering trade at all, or interfering; because the supply and demand will always regulate wages. Sometime ago, perhaps 10 or 15 years ago, we had a great deal of disturbance in Lancashire, principally among the weavers, and there were several meetings; and at that time I was very anxious we should have had a committee of masters to regulate wages; and my only reason (and I stated it to several) for not pursuing it was, I thought it would do mischief, because they would fix them so high as to injure the demand; because no manufacturer of any respectability, if the power lay in his hands, would ever think of fixing the wages at such a price that the weaver could not live well. And I have thought myself that it is necessary for the existence of our trade that wages should not be high. I find that in most parts of Germany they can lay down yarn at an expense of 2 ½ *d.* per pound; and in any part of Switzerland, and the more distant parts of Germany and Saxony, it can be laid down at 3 *d.* per pound on the Manchester price; that includes the commission for purchasing, packing, carriage, freight, insurance, and carriage on the other side; and hitherto the whole of the yarn has been reeled from the cop, put into hanks and bundled, and packed in bales; it was a more expensive process to reel it back again than off the cop; but lately they have began purchasing the warps in a state actually prepared to go into the loom; and they are purchasing also pin-cops, ready to fit into the shuttle.

1803. They will not bear much pressure, will they?—To a certain extent they will press them; the whole of our yarn that is sent from a spinner to any distant part is packed in that way; it is not pressed hard.

1804. You pack them in boxes, the pin-cops?—In skips; a man in packing a skip will press it down as much as he can with his hand, but not more than that; they press it as hard as they can with the hand, and pack them in hogsheads.

1805. And those hogsheads will hold 220?—I should think more than that; I suppose 450 lbs. to 500 lbs.

1806. Then probably there are 1,000 lbs. of yarn in some of them?—Yes.

1807. That increases the freight?—Yes, certainly.

1808. The department to which you have just alluded is a department with which weavers have nothing to do?—They have nothing to do with that. I stated that a weaver can support his family, I should suppose, in those countries, at a third, or perhaps one-quarter the same expense he can do here: I think the foreign weavers are also more patient and painstaking weavers; they absolutely produce better cloth than we do, out of inferior materials.

1809. But at a higher cost?—No, I apprehend not at a higher cost; they have a higher yarn to work it, but then there is a greater difference in their wages or maintenance than there is in the price of the yarn. They begin to interfere with us in many of our foreign markets.

1810. You stated you yourself at one time were in favour of a committee of manufacturers to regulate wages?—Yes.

1811. Do you think that can be accomplished without legislative interference?—I very much doubt it. When I was a younger man, and more sanguine, I thought we could raise the wages by combination of manufacturers; and myself and several other respectable manufacturers agreed together, and a great many others professed to agree with us, upon a certain day to advance the wages; there was a good demand for goods; provisions were high, and wages low, and on the day appointed we advanced the wages, and continued to pay those higher wages some time; but other manufacturers, instead of joining us in those higher wages, circulated reports we had purchased a great quantity of inferior yarn, and they supposed we had not only given one advance to get it woven, but we should have to give a second, and be very glad to get our bad yarn wove. There was no truth in the thing; we, as an individual house, threw away about 1,100 *l.*, without getting a penny towards it again.

1812. What year was that?—I think about 12 years ago.

1813. Was that the year 1824?—I think it was about the year 1822.

1814. Now, do you think if there had been any legislative enactment upon the subject, to bind the others as well as yourselves, that that could have been permanent?—I think, for a time, it might.

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1815. Could true returns of wages paid by the manufacturers in your district be obtained, by inquiry of them and of their weavers?—No question about that.

1816. Could the probable quantity of goods of each sort, made by every manufacturer, be obtained in like manner?—Yes, I think so.

1817. Would it not be easy to select the least number of manufacturers given in such returns, who together make at least one half the goods of each sort in each parish or township where hand-loom weaving is carried on, in your county?—Yes, it would.

1818. Would it not be easy to take a majority of one or two out of those selected who were paying the highest rate of wages for each sort of goods?—Yes, because that would be ascertained by the returns.

1819. Would it not also be easy to determine the average rate of wages paid by such majority for each sort of goods?—Yes.

1820. The average wages being so taken from a voluntary rate paid by many in the trade, could any just complaint be urged by any manufacturer against a law that required that no manufacturer in each parish or township should pay less wages than that average?—It would be attended with considerable difficulties, inasmuch as there is such a variety; for instance, there are different qualities of yarn; one man may be making 6-quarter 60-reed, 120 picks; one man may receive good wages at 6 *s.*, and another, for the same article, may be worse paid at 7 *s.*, on account of the inferiority of the yarn.

1821. That is a temporary evil?—No question about it.

1822. Taking the average, the yarn is of an average quality?—No; there are many different shades in the quality of yarns.

1823. What may fall to the lot of weavers is an average lot?—Any description of yarn will vary, the same number; for instance, take 60 twists, and use warp of that description, you may buy that quality of yarn at 6 *d.* or 8 *d.* a pound difference. The quality of yarn with which that cloth is made will generally vary 2 *d.* a pound.

1824. Is there any specific portion of the weavers delegated to work up the bad yarn, and another the good yarn?—No; a man that is making thin inferior cloth will buy the inferior description of warp and weft; a man that is determined to have a good cloth, he must of course buy a good quality of both warp and weft, or he cannot have a good cloth made.

1825. Then it forms a different species of work?—Yes; but it is still designated by the same name.

1826. That might form one of the elements in the computation you alluded to?—Yes.

1827. The work under the bad and the work under the good yarn may form as great a difference in the work which ought to be taken in this computation as entirely a different species of goods?—You would take an average of what is woven, and then, on that principle, every time the average was taken it would advance.

1828. But that average would be found in the investigation; in the returns it would exist?—Yes.

1829. Those paying the highest price and manufacturing by approximation one half, the different quantities of yarn would enter into the computation?—Yes, they would. I was going to state, there are great shades of difference in width also; some manufacturers of cloth will warp it 45, 46, 47, 48, up to 54 inches. Formerly, almost all muslin cloth used to be warped from 52 to 54 inches; now, a great portion is warped only 45 or 46; and it is still designated as a 6-quarter 60-reed cloth. That has arisen a good deal from competition, one person wanting to undersell another; but perhaps, principally, on account of the American demand. For the American market, they pay duty by the square inch; and therefore, if the cloth comes up about 37 inches, it is as wide as they require it. For the East India and other markets, they require cloth to be 45 or 46 inches wide.

1830. And that would form, do you mean, a serious objection to the plan?—I think it is practicable, but at the same time it would be attended with a great deal of difficulty, there are so many grades of difference.

1831. The objections you have stated are objections of detail; have you any objections in principle to state?—I have stated before, I have objections to all legislative interference.

1832. You have no objections, but the general principle of interfering with the supply and demand of labour?—Certainly; I have stated before that the hand-loom

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loom weavers must be very much reduced in quantity from foreign competition and from the power-looms.

1833. If the objections in detail that you have stated could be made to disappear, you have no further objections, except to the one of general principle?—No.

1834. Do you think, if such a plan were adopted, there would be afterwards some inequality of wages, that is, would some manufacturers pay the average only and others pay something more than the average?—No question about that; those people that require a superior quality of cloth must pay an advance of wages, at least 10 per cent. more than inferior manufacturers.

1835. If returns of wages and of goods manufactured were required by law periodically, and the average wages taken as before stated, would the practice cause a slow but certain rise in wages?—No question about it; from the cause I have stated, the superior manufacturers must always pay something more than the common manufacturers, and that would of course produce a higher average every time.

1836. Would such a process create a competition to pay liberal wages, and stay the competition, now much complained of, to reduce wages?—I think it would not at all alter that effect; people are stimulated to pay higher or lower wages just as it answers their own purpose; if they have orders to execute and want to get the cloth, they will advance the wages of course, and then when the trade becomes over-done a reduction takes place.

1837. Would not such a plan tend to promote a curtailment of the hours of labour under the circumstances of slackness of trade, rather than a reduction of wages, which you have thought preferable?—I think it would. I think it would tend to curtail the quantity made.

1838. And so far it would be a beneficial effect?—Yes.

1839. Have you seen a bill proposed by Mr. Fielden, and the evidence he gave on that subject before a Committee of the House last Session?—Yes, I have.

1840. If an Act founded on it were passed, could it be easily evaded?—I do not know; I think it might; we are expert in evasion; there is no Factory Act they have been able to pass that has not been evaded; and I think it would be difficult to make it binding.

1841. Would the power there given for settling disputes by arbitration be sufficient?—I hardly think it would.

1842. Will you state your reasons why you think not?—I think myself, with respect to arbitration, it is of great importance that something should be done upon that point; but I think it might be settled by a master and a man, it being left to their decision, and if they could not agree, they appointing a third person.

1843. That is the plan proposed by Mr. Fielden in his Bill?—I thought it was not.

1844. Then, if that be the plan proposed by Mr. Fielden, you think that would be sufficient?—Yes; I think there should be no appeal from it; we find it exceedingly difficult; if we got a weaver that spoils his work very much, and we refuse to pay him, he then employs some little pettyfogging attorney; he does not go to arbitration; and the litigation and trouble is such that no respectable house would meet him or go into court with him; he would settle the thing upon the best terms he could, and let the man have his own way.

1845. Do you understand that the plan upon which you have lately been examined is, in a great measure, the plan introduced into Mr. Fielden's Bill?—I have perceived by the questions that were asked me it was bearing upon that measure.

1846. Mr. Fielden's plan is indeed very much like the plan you have been examined upon?—Yes.

1847. You stated the fact of there being a very considerable diminution in the number of hand-loom weavers generally?—Yes.

1848. In the district with which you are acquainted?—Yes.

1849. And what do you apprehend has become of that population?—They have gone principally into power-looms or other employment.

1850. You think that is the principal absorption?—Yes.

1851. Do not you think that an advantageous circumstance under the general circumstances of the hand-loom trade?—No question about it; I could give an instance: Some years ago, when the weavers commenced breaking the power-looms in every direction, where they were just introducing them, they had not found the

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advantage of them, only that it was pressing very hard on the hand-loom without discovering the benefit; a deputation was sent over to Staley-bridge and to Ashton and to Hyde to know if they would concur in destroying property there; the weavers turned out almost to a man, and said, "No, we will not, but we will protect our property;" and there was not a single loom broken, nor did any of those people dare to approach that neighbourhood, and that was where the power-looms were almost principally employed.

1852. They had been in operation some time then?—Yes, they had discovered the value of them.

1853. Do not you conceive that there are many circumstances attending the nature of the hand-loom occupation which tend to make it a low-priced description of labour?—It always will be so; the first is the facility in making weavers; the next is there are a great many little farmers that fill up their vacant time with weaving; another thing is there is a great importation of Irish; and another thing a great many of the handicrafts or mechanics that are brought up in the neighbourhood learn to weave before they go to be apprenticed, and some of those will even fall back on weaving when it is paid pretty well and mechanical trades are flat.

1854. Then you are of opinion that there is in progress a state of transition from that species of occupation to other and preferable modes of occupation?—I think there is a probability of a great increase of power-looms, which will take them up to a certain extent; but the conviction of my mind is that the number of hand-loom weavers will be still very much further reduced, because from the power-looms that at present exist, I am speaking within compass when I say they are capable of weaving one-half of the different fabrics that are at present woven by the hand.

1855. Do you not think that if legislative interference were adopted in a shape that could not be evaded, that it would tend to check prejudicially that species of transition from that occupation to others?—I think it would increase it.

1856. You think it would increase the transition?—Yes; it would tend to throw a great many hand-loom weavers out of employ, and of course they would get other employment as soon as they could.

1857. Do you think that such legislative interference as has been proposed, that is, fixing a minimum rate of wages, would tend to throw a good many hand-loom weavers out of employ?—I do.

1858. There are a great many small capitalists in the trade with whom the reduction of wages is generally supposed to begin?—Certainly.

1859. Do you conceive that legislative interference with the proceedings of those capitalists would tend to drive them out of the market altogether?—I think to a certain extent it would have that tendency.

1860. Then would there not be a risk of leaving a certain number of hand-loom weavers without any employment at all, instead of leaving them at low wages?—I do not think it would be likely to leave them, because the larger manufacturers would employ them. I think myself if there were no small manufacturers, that both the wages and the employment would be much more regular than it is, because they would not be affected by every flat period; they would not be driven to sacrifice their goods.

1861. And so far the effect would be good and wholesome?—Yes, it might.

1862. You consider that the population employed in the hand-loom weaving is superabundant; does not that circumstance tend to place that population a good deal at the mercy of the employer?—No question it does, because the operation has been in the manufacturing; every man has a right to pay what wages he likes, without regard to his neighbour. If a man does not at all regard the consequence of reducing, and thinks that from the great abundance of labour in the market he can get an article which other people are paying 6*s.* for wove for 5*s.*, he frequently would do it.

1863. Supposing the principle of arbitration adopted, would not an employer that was dissatisfied with the result of that proceeding be fully able to dismiss the man he has employed altogether?—I do not understand the question.

1864. You have stated there are disputes between employers and weavers, which are now conducted on a bad footing by small attornies, and so on?—That alludes only to disputes about the work, making it good or bad; it does not allude to disputes about what shall be paid for it if it is good work, because every warp I put out I state distinctly to the weaver what he is to receive, and whether that is a high or a low wage, he has a right to receive that and no more, and therefore it would require no arbitration to settle that point; it is a contract made between the master

master and the weaver. When I spoke of arbitration, I spoke of men spoiling work or weaving it very badly indeed, when the taker in would refuse to pay him the whole of his wages in consequence of its being badly executed.

1865. Then you think the principle of arbitration would be useful to settle disputes of that nature?— Certainly.

1866. But ultimately, if the master were dissatisfied with the result of that arbitration, would he not be inclined to cease having any further transactions with the man whom he conceived had misbehaved?—We find it the best policy, if we get a man that does not do his duty, to have no litigation, but we tell our people to settle the thing upon the best terms they can, and never employ that man again.

1867. You intimated, that supposing all the manufacturers to be large capitalists and no small capitals to be employed, that that would tend to the benefit of trade and to the stability of the wages, inasmuch as they would not be subject to the fluctuation that they are at present subject to?—I did.

1868. But do you think that that is a principle that it would be proper to legislate upon?—No.

1869. Are you not aware that there are a great many of the manufacturers in Lancashire who have risen from small beginnings to be men of great importance?—No question about that.

1870. Then the tendency of any law that should fix that only men of a certain capital should embark in this business would be to check and to prevent that rising from which the greatest part of the manufacturers of Lancashire have originally started?—No question about it.

1871. You have said in the evidence you have given, that much of this evil arises from children being employed in the manufacture of weaving, and in that way there had accumulated more hands than there was labour for?—I said, from the facility of making weavers.

1872. As the Legislature has interfered with respect to the age at which children should be employed in factories, do you think if there was a legislative enactment that should determine that no child under 13 years of age should be employed in hand-loom weaving, that that would have the effect of diminishing that undue competition that arises from there being too large a supply of labour in the market, and of course too little labour?—I think it would be impossible to carry any such enactment into force, because I conceive that any family that was half starving, and had children who could weave, would be very apt to lock the door and set the children to work; but my own opinion is unfriendly to any legislation of that sort. I think as far as legislation goes to protect children in factories, it is well to do so, but I think the less the Legislature does with commerce the better.

1873. Is there now too large a supply of labour in Lancashire?—Of weaving labour, decidedly so, and too little in all factory hands, except spinners, and all mechanics. We find the factory hands are very scarce indeed, not only in Manchester, but in Bolton and Preston, especially Preston; we have great quantities come up from the file country, but in consequence of the increase of flax mills, and as things are now, all factory hands are very scarce; and I do think that the weavers do not turn themselves about as they might, or bring up their children to turn to other businesses.

1874. Do the hands employed in factories obtain better wages than the hand-loom weavers have?—I think so.

1875. Then what is the reason the hand-loom weavers will not go into the mills?—I think that the hours of labour is one principal objection.

1876. Do you think the hours of labour ought to be reduced for mill-hands?—I think it should be reduced to not more than 63 hours. I have always been opposed to the 69.

1877. Have the spinners in Manchester and in Bolton opposed the reduction of the hours of labour in factories?—In some they have. In some they are anxious to adopt the shortest time; in others they are equally anxious to have the time as at present.

1878. Then the spinners are as much undecided in their own minds as to the propriety of a short-time bill as the manufacturers who employ the hand-loom weavers are to any regulation by law in regard to wages?—I think there is a great difference of opinion, not only as to the factory hours of labour, but as to the manufacturing also.

1879. Are you aware that petitions have lately been presented to the House praying for the continuance of the present Act; that is, that part which extends

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to 69 hours, and asking for a repeal of that part which limits the labour of children under 13 to eight hours a day, or 48 hours a week?—I think there have been such petitions.

1880. Then is it because these young children under 13 are worked long hours in factories, that their parents suffer the poverty and misery which they are now in, rather than subject their children to go into the factories?—I think that is not generally the case.

1881. But why do the weavers refuse to let their children go to the factories?—I do not know that they do.

1882. But I understood you to say that there was a deficiency of hands for the mills?—Yes, decidedly so, spinners excepted.

1883. And I asked you why there was a deficiency of hands for the mills, when the weavers are being so much worse paid than the hands in the mills are paid?—I believe the hand-loom weavers are worse paid than in the mill.

1884. Then what reason can you assign why the weavers will not send their children to the mills?—I think myself that weavers, generally speaking, are averse to factory hours, because I do not think weavers are a class of people that work very long hours.

1885. Well, is it a reasonable objection which the weavers make to these factory hours?—I cannot say.

1886. Can you give any opinion?—I do not know; I think myself there might be more weavers' children got into mills.

1887. What will a child at 13 gain in wages at the hand-loom per week?—Very much will depend upon whether the boy or the girl is a good or a bad weaver, or the particular class. If they have been weaving for some time, or have been brought up to it from 10 to 13, they may probably get from 6 *s.* to 8 *s.* a week at 13 to 14 years old.

1888. At the hand-loom?—Yes.

1889. And what net wages will that leave?—If it was 8 *s.* it would leave 6 *s.* I beg to correct my statement: 8 *s.* is more than a child of 13 to 14 can earn, unless a very good weaver and good work.

1890. It would leave 6 *s.* for a child of 13?—Yes, if it could earn 8 *s.* gross.

1891. What wages can a child of 13 obtain in the mills?—I really do not know. I did not expect to be examined relative to the mills, and therefore did not satisfy myself as to what wages they could obtain. I should suppose, perhaps, from 6 *s.* to 7 *s.* or 8 *s.*

1892. I want to know why there is a scarcity of hands when there is a surplus population; I want to know why the hands employed at the loom, whom you stated to be in great distress from low wages, will not go into mills, where they can get better wages?—I have not stated them to be in great distress; I have stated the wages which they receive, and perhaps where the others may have under-stated the weavers' wages, because it does appear a singular thing that there should be a scarcity of mill-hands; but at Manchester, Bolton and Preston, with which I am more particularly acquainted, that is an admitted fact, and therefore, probably, the weaver got more wages than what is generally stated, or they would go into the mills.

1893. But what reason do you assign why the weaver will not go into the mills if they can get better wages in the mills than they can at the hand-loom?—I do not know that I have stated that they could get better wages; the spinners get much better wages, a man-spinner or woman-spinner, than a man or a woman-weaver; but whether a child 13 or 14 will get much more in a mill or not I do not know.

1894. Is there a scarcity of men, then, as well as children for the mills?—No, certainly not; there is a superabundance of spinners.

1895. Then is the scarcity in the children?—Yes; it is in the lower hands, the card-loom hands.

1896. Are you aware that a correspondence has been going on in Lancashire with the Board of Commissioners under the new Poor Law Bill, representing there was a scarcity of hands?—We have had a communication from them.

1897. Are you aware it was stated to the Board of Commissioners that whole families, if sent down from the south, could find beneficial employment in the north?—I am not aware of any such communication; we have had no correspondence with them.

1898. You have admitted that there is no scarcity of men for the mills?—No, certainly not.

1899. Then if families were brought down from the south, composed of men, women and children, will that be beneficial to the hands employed in either mills or in weaving in Lancashire?—It will not be beneficial to those that are already there, but it is very probable that they will find employment, because I think there is also a scarcity of labourers of various sorts.

1900. Then hand-loom weavers are scarce?—No; hand-loom weavers, we have too many of them.

1901. Then there is no scarcity of hands in Lancashire?—Not of weavers, certainly not.

1902. Will the introduction of families from Buckinghamshire into the borough of Bolton lessen the wages of those already employed there?—If it is to any great extent, it will, no doubt.

1903. But do you think it was a wise suggestion by those in Lancashire to make representations to the Board of Commissioners that there was a scarcity of hands in that district?—I am not aware that that has been the case; if there has been such a representation, I should rather suppose it went from the inspector of factories; I am not aware of it; I cannot speak to what other individuals have done. It is a clear and undisputed fact that there is a great scarcity of mill hands and a superabundance of weavers.

1904. You have stated that a child of 13 can weave so much work as will give it in gross earning 8 *s.* a week?—Yes, if it is a good weaver, from 6 *s.* to 8 *s.*; but it would be an extreme case; that is both a very good weaver and good work.

1905. And that these gross earnings will be reduced by 2 *s.*, that is, leaving 6 *s.* net for this child of 13 years of age?—Yes.

1906. At what description of work must this child be employed to obtain that sum?—Upon thin ginghams, or upon cambrics, or jaconets, or handkerchiefs. I stated that from 6 *s.* to 8 *s.*; you take the highest; I think it is probable a child 13 years of age may do that if it is a very good weaver; of course there is a great difference, and I suppose this, partly because I think if the weavers did not earn more than they themselves admit there would be a greater willingness to seek other employment.

1907. You spoke of their getting from 6 *s.* to 7 *s.* a week, the weaver of 13; do you think the weaver of 13 could weave one of these 6-quarter, 60-reed, 120 picks, for which you stated 6 *s.* 9 *d.* was your price and 6 *s.* 6 *d.* Horrocks and Jackson's?—I think it would be too heavy work for a child of that age.

1908. To weave one of that description?—Yes.

1909. There are then narrower fabrics?—Yes, many; jaconets and striped muslins of various sorts, used for printers, and ginghams.

1910. Can you give the price that has been paid for this description of weaving, that is, the fabrics you have named, for any number of years back?—I find in 1822 we paid 8 *s.* 6 *d.* for that cloth; in 1825, 9 *s.*; in 1827, 7 *s.*; in 1830, 5 *s.* 6 *d.*; that appears to be the lowest wages; in 1834 and at present we pay 6 *s.* 9 *d.*

1911. Can you give the price in each successive year since you became a manufacturer of that 60-reed cambric?—I cannot; I have not such a statement with me.

1912. Why have you selected those years that you have now named to give the prices?—It has been selected for me; I requested it to be made out in the years 1820, 1825, 1830 and 1834. But I find that the list that I have here is made out, and I state, beginning them at 1822, and not at all contemplating an examination of this sort. We are not particular in keeping lists of them, for we have such an abundance of old books that we are frequently forced to destroy to get them out of the way.

1913. Is there a fabric wove in Manchester and Bolton which goes by the name of the 60-reed cambric, 120 shots an inch?—Yes.

1914. How long will it take an able-bodied man to weave one of those cambrics?—I think a man may weave a piece and a half a week. Mr. George Jackson of Preston, who is perhaps the largest manufacturer of that kind, gave it as his opinion that a man would weave a piece and three quarters.

1915. That is supposing him to have yarn of the best quality?—Yes.

1916. You think a piece and a half is sufficient?—Yes; I think a man might weave a piece and a half.

1917. How much a piece?—Six shillings and ninepence.

1918. That is Mr. Horrocks's price?—No; Mr. Horrocks's price is 6 *s* 6 *d.*, ours is 6 *s.* 9 *d.*

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1919. Do you make that article yourself?—Yes.

1920. And you think that a weaver can weave a piece and a half; that is, an able-bodied man can weave a piece and a half of that fabric for which you pay 6 *s.* 9 *d.*?—Yes.

1921. Would he be able to weave this every successive week for 52 weeks without injury to his health?—Yes, I think so.

1922. Would it require him to be a man of only an average strength and of average capacity to do that, or would you select one of the best workmen?—He must be a good weaver.

1923. What number of hours would he have to work the loom to weave a piece and a half in the week?—Sixty hours.

1924. There are 120 shots in the inch, are there not?—Yes; they generally average from 116 to 120.

1925. How many yards will there be in the piece and a half?—There are 24 yards and a half in the piece; that would be 36 yards and three quarters.

1926. With 120 shots in the inch?—Yes.

1927. Have you ever calculated the number of times the weaver would have to throw the shuttle to execute that work in the course of the week?—I have not.

1928. Were you ever a weaver yourself?—I never wove but two pieces. I wove two pieces of calico; I wove the first in eight days, and the second in five.

1929. That was when you were in your apprenticeship?—No; when I was at a watering-place I met with a weaver I knew; he was weaving calicoes, and I thought I should like to try, and I wove two pieces while I was there.

1930. Are you aware that the weavers from Bolton who have come up here to give evidence, both in 1833 and 1834, have stated that the weaving of one piece of 6-quarter 60-reed is as much as he is able to perform?—I am aware; I have seen that evidence.

1931. Do you believe that to be true or false?—No; I think I have stated before I believe he can weave a piece and a half.

1932. Now, you have stated that a child of 13 can earn 8 *s.* a week gross wages; do you mean at the same description of work?—I say from 6 *s.* to 8 *s.*; I say it is possible; I should think it is not in many instances; but I stated if the weavers did not get more than what they admit themselves in their own published statements, or at least not bring up their children weavers, they would go into the factories, in which there is evidently a scarcity of hands; and I think in stating from 6 *s.* to 8 *s.* (you take the extreme,) it is probable, but not a very common case, because it is stated that a weaver, an able-bodied man, can only earn 5 *s.* 6 *d.*

1933. Now, can they weave more cloth now than they could in the year 1818?—No doubt about it.

1934. How much more in the week?—Perhaps 10 or 15 per cent., or perhaps 20 per cent., because you are aware that yarn is much better than it was at that time; that they are better warped, better prepared, better sized, and everything much improved since 1818.

1935. But does it not require fine yarn to weave that work?—No.

1936. What is the number of yarn?—Sixty hanks to the pound.

1937. Sixty to the warp?—Yes.

1938. And what weft?—Eighties, or eighty-five some use.

1939. And did it not always require good yarn to weave cloth with 120 shots in the inch?—Everything good or bad is comparative. Yarn is very much improved since I first became a manufacturer. There has been great improvement in the quality of yarn spun, and the winding, warping and sizing, and everything is very much better.

1940. Now, taking the weaver's wages at the price you have stated that an able-bodied man can weave a piece and a half a week, what would be his net earning for himself and his family?—Ten shillings.

1941. Then you think that an active able-bodied man with great exertion could get 7 *s.* 7 ½ *d.* a week?—Yes. No, himself and family, if only one weaver, get 10 *s.*

1942. Do you think that is sufficient to maintain a weaver, his wife, and one or two children?—I do not; but you will bear in mind that perhaps one of his children that was eight or ten years old would wind for him, and that the whole of this 10 *s.* would go into his family.

1943. But are there not hundreds of families in Manchester and Bolton, and the

the respective districts, where there is a man and his wife and one or two little children?—Yes.

1944. And the man, working as industriously as you have stated, could not get more than 7 *s.* 7 ½ *d.* a week net earnings?—Himself and family get 10 *s.*

1945. Now has he his rent to pay out of that?—Yes.

1946. Has he his firing to pay out of that?—Yes.

1947. Has he the expense of his sew, and the expense of looms and implements to pay out of that?—Out of the 10 *s.*

1948. But I am speaking of the 7 *s.* 7 ½ *d.*?—No, his gross is 10 *s.*

1949. Then will the difference between the 7 *s.* 7 ½ *d.* and the 10 *s.* pay his rent, pay for his fuel, and every other expense which he has to incur?—I cannot tell that; the gross wages is 10 *s.*; with respect to deductions, these deductions will rest with his family; it is very rarely a man gets his winding done out.

1950. Those deductions relate merely to the implements with which he works?—Formerly it was very common to employ journeymen, and when a journeyman was employed, 3 *d.* out of every 1 *s.* was deducted by the man who employed him for those various expenses.

1951. But the deductions you allude to do not include rent and fire?—No.

1952. Except loom rent?—Yes, it would include the loom rent.

1953. Does it include the original cost of the loom?—No.

1954. Then he has to provide himself with a loom?—Yes.

1955. Which is some expense?—Yes.

1956. He has to provide himself with the implements which are necessary for his use in working that loom?—Yes.

1957. He has to provide himself with a house in which to reside?—Yes.

1958. With fuel?—Yes.

1959. And with light?—Yes.

1960. Out of the 7 *s.* 7½ *d.* a-week?—Yes.

1961. That which is deducted from the 10 *s.*?—Yes.

1962. Can you tell what the rent of a man with a two-loom shop would be per week?—I think it is about 6 *l.* or six guineas a year.

1963. That would be per week pretty near half-a-crown?—Nearly half-a-crown.

1964. Then out of this 7 *s.* 7 ½ *d.* he has to take half-a-crown, or is the 2 *s.* 4 *d.* for rent?—The gross earnings would be 10 *s.*, not 7 *s.* 7 ½ *d.*

1965. What would his fuel cost him?—I really do not know.

1966. Would it cost him a shilling?—I really cannot speak to it.

1967. What is the price of coals?—Coals are about from 7 *s.* to 8 *s.* a ton.

1968. And what would you estimate the fuel to cost him, because this is a serious thing for a poor man, you will recollect?—Yes, I am aware of that.

1969. But what would the fuel, in your opinion, cost him?—I cannot speak to it; I could only guess at it, the same as any other.

1970. Well, give us a guess?—Perhaps it might cost him two guineas a year.

1971. Would it cost him 8 *d.* a week?—I should think it would.

1972. Then 8 *d.* added to the 2 *s.* 4 *d.* would make 3 *s.*?—Yes.

1973. Now, what is the expense of the shuttle, the pickers and the reeds?—The reeds are always found by the manufacturer; he finds his own brush to dress his yarn with, and the shuttle; but the heel and the reed is found by the manufacturer always.

1974. What would these cost him, the shuttle, and the pickers and the brush?—Those are reckoned in the previous deductions.

1975. Then this weaver, weaving half as much again as the Bolton weavers say is a fair day's work, would get, according to your showing, 4 *s.* 7 ½ *d.*, clear of all expenses; that is for food and clothing?—Yes, as you show it.

1976. Well, now suppose a family of a man and his wife, (and you have admitted there are many thousands,) a man and his wife and one or two young children?—Yes.

1977. Having 4 *s.* 7 ½ *d.* a week for food and clothing, are not all those families in very deep distress?—There is no question about there being a great deal of distress; at the same time, you are only calculating the man's wages; there is the wife's wages; where a man has two or three young children, that is, perhaps, his worst situation; when they get up a little, he begins to be relieved; but his wife, if he has only two children, would do something; perhaps if the husband earns 10 *s.*, the wife would at least earn 5 *s.*

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1978. But how old would his eldest child have to be before he could obtain that beneficial employment of him?—Why, according to the present regulation, it cannot be till they are 11 or 12.

1979. How would his wife gain 5 *s.*?—By weaving.

1980. Do you think that the wife of a poor man with two children would be able to gain 5 *s.*?—They frequently do so.

1981. What would be the deductions from that?—The same proportion, one quarter, on the same principle: but you bear in mind that the whole of that still remains in the family, and, as I stated in the first instance, it is supposed that not a new loom has been made for the last 10 years; if a man once purchases looms, they are there; he has no expense for that; his brushes and shuttles are the greatest expense.

1982. You would admit, of course, the wife has to attend to the domestic affairs of the house; she has to wash and bake, if they can get anything to bake; she has the cooking of all sorts to do; she has to keep the house clean; she has to make the beds, if they have got any; and there are a variety of things which she has to do that cannot be dispensed with; now, do not you think that the wife would be much harder wrought than the husband, provided she gained 5 *s.* a week by weaving?—I do not know; perhaps she might.

1983. Then suppose them to have three children under six years of age, as hundreds of families have, you must be well aware of?—Yes.

1984. Is it possible for that family to subsist in the way that industrious workmen should do, with the earnings you have stated?—No; I should be very happy if they were in better circumstances.

1985. Then you do think it is desirable that something should be done to relieve these hand-loom weavers?—I do; and I should co-operate in anything that could be done, and will not give place to any man or set of men feeling more for the poor than I have done, and I have given many proofs of it, but I cannot alter their situation.

1986. Are you aware that in 1826 there were meetings at Bolton and Manchester and other places, when attempts were made to establish lists of prices by the different manufacturers, and which they agreed to observe?—I am not aware of that.

1987. Are you aware that there has been at any period?—There have been various attempts made, but I am not aware of any regular organized plan, or even any great body of people agreeing to any arrangement of that sort.

1988. Are you aware that public meetings have been called?—Yes.

1989. In Bolton?—Yes.

1990. And in Manchester?—Yes.

1991. Of the manufacturers themselves?—Yes.

1992. For what object were these meetings?—They were called frequently to take into consideration if any arrangement or anything could be done to regulate wages. I have stated to the Committee myself that we sacrificed about 1,100 *l.* once in a combination; I call it by no other better name; but under all circumstances, we thought the weavers' wages might be raised if a few of the largest and most influential houses would agree to a certain rate of wages, and the thing was done, but it failed after a trial of four to six weeks.

1993. Can you bring to your recollection the time when any meeting was held, which you yourself attended?—I do not recollect attending any but one, the Bolton.

1994. Do you recollect the year?—No, I do not.

1995. Can you tell whether one or two, or three years?—There is no particular date by which I can call to my mind the period. When the Bolton meeting took place, we were paying 6 *s.* for 6-quarter 60-reed comb, 120 picks. Some of the smaller manufacturers had absolutely been putting the same work out at 4 *s.* 6 *d.*; and it was proposed at that meeting to advance the wages, and I think they were to be advanced every month or two till they got to 20 *s.* Now the thing was so absurd, in that state of trade, that I attended no meeting after that.

1996. I think you have stated that in 1822 you yourself expended 1,100 *l.* in trying to uphold wages?—Yes, about that time.

1997. Now I find from the list of prices paid for the 60-reed cambric,—it was delivered in by several weavers who have come up from Bolton,—that the price in 1822 was 8 *s.* 6 *d.*?—I may be mistaken in the date, but the time I allude to 6-quarter 60-reeds was only 6 *s.*

1998. And

1998. And for the last five years the price for the same work has been only 5*s.* 6*d.*; that is, commencing with 1829 and ending with 1833?—With respect to that, ours in 1830 was 5*s.* 6*d.*; that is the lowest price we ever paid for that; in 1834 it was 6*s.* 9*d.*, and it is 6*s.* 9*d.* at present. Mr. Makin, who was examined before this Committee last year, stated to me the other day that he was paying 6*s.* for that article now; but at the same time, I mean to observe, that what was described as 6-quarters 60-reed 10 or 15 years ago and what is described as 6-quarters 60-reed at the present day are not the same article; for there is very few of the 6-quarter 60-reed warped more than 46 or 48 inches, and 15 years ago it was all warped at 52.

1999. That is, there is a difference of those four inches in the width?—Yes.

2000. But they have the same number of shots per inch?—Yes.

2001. And the weaver is required to throw the shuttle across as often now as he did then?—Yes.

2002. That difference in the width can make no material difference in the labour of the weaver, can it?—Oh yes, considerable; he has less yarn to dress, and he has less to pick his shuttle.

2003. But can he get through a greater quantity of work; to any great extent?—Yes.

2004. How much more will he do in the week by having the width reduced from 52 to 48 inches?—Perhaps 10 per cent.

2005. Now have you any reason to doubt, or any memorandum that will satisfy you, that in 1822, when you expended 1,100*l.* to keep up the wages, that the price of the 60-reed cambric was 8*s.* 6*d.*?—It appears by my account that we paid 8*s.* 6*d.* in 1822.

2006. Did many other manufacturers unite with you in trying to bring about the object you had in view?—Perhaps five or six; all of them large ones.

2007. Was that in Manchester or in Bolton?—In Ashton and in Bolton.

2008. Then you thought in 1822, with the price at 8*s.* 6*d.*, the wages were much too low for the hand-loom weavers?—Certainly.

2009. Then you can have no doubt about it, when the price is now 6*s.* 6*d.* or 6*s.* 9*d.* you are paying, and many paying 5*s.* 6*d.*, that the price is still more too low?—Certainly; no doubt about that.

2010. And that makes out a strong reason in your mind that something should be done to relieve these weavers if it be practicable?—Yes, certainly.

2011. Have you on more occasions than one given countenance to these meetings to establish a regulation of wages among the manufacturers?—I have not given countenance to any since that time; for if a manufacturer comes to me, and asks me if I think it is expedient to raise the wages, I would say to him, if you will attend to your own business, I will do so too; for every attempt to raise wages up by combination or by natural means have completely failed; and I therefore think it best for every man to attend to his own business, and not to combine.

2012. But admitting that the weavers are in distress, as you have stated, and admitting also what you have stated, that it is your opinion something should be done for the relief of the weavers, what is it that you would suggest to the Committee as an effectual relief for them?—I have no suggestion to make; my own opinion is, that bad as their situation is at present, it will be worse if they do not get other employment; and therefore what I would recommend is, if the Legislature could do anything in providing for the children being apprenticed to other trades, mechanical trades; I feel satisfied that such is the increase of power-looms, that the weaver's situation will be much worse than what it is at present.

2013. But have not you said that if the wages could be raised that it would facilitate the employment of weavers in factories or upon the power-looms?—No; if wages were raised it would rather tend to increase the number of weavers than lead them to seek other employment.

2014. But why should it do that?—If they could get good wages as weavers why should they look for other employment? and if wages were raised considerably from the present prices, provided they could get work, but my opinion is they could not get work, I think the hand-loom manufacturers themselves are suffering very much at present, their stocks are very great, and the wages are much more likely to go down than advance.

2015. Now you are engaged in making a variety of fancy goods, I understood you to say?—Yes.

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2016. Do you know any article which you make in these fancy goods that is now or has been wove to any extent by power-looms?—No.

2017. Then why do you dread the operation of power-looms, provided the wages of fancy weavers could be raised?—Because it would drive them upon power-looms; we ourselves are going to weave by power, and I stated early in the examination that I am sure we cannot maintain the situation we have hitherto maintained except we ourselves go into power, because other houses are making by power many articles that we have hitherto got wove by hand; and I do not see any difficulty in weaving almost any description of fancy goods by power, except perhaps checked goods, but such as spots and satin stripes, and tape stripes, can be wove by power; in fact they are in Glasgow at the present time weaving printed stripes by power; they are also weaving book muslins by power.

2018. Have any attempts been made to weave the 60-reed cambric on power-looms?—Oh yes, a great many.

2019. Have those attempts succeeded or not?—Yes.

2020. What proportion of the 60-reed cambric do you suppose is now manufactured by power-looms of the whole brought into the market?—A very small proportion at present.

2021. How long is it since the power-loom was first tried to weave 60-reed cambric?—Perhaps two or three years.

2022. What was the reason then that the power-loom has not been extended to that description of manufacture?—Because it has hitherto had more profitable employment in lower qualities and less difficulty.

2023. Then it is not from the competition with the power-loom that the 60-reed cambric is suffering?—Not that individual make, because I conceive that there is no great quantity of that reed being made by power at present, but the 50-reed is made extensively by power.

2024. And notwithstanding that the prices of hand-loom weaving, where the power does not compete, have fallen in the manner you have stated?—Yes.

2025. But how has it been that the power-loom can have been in any way the cause of this depreciation in the wages of hand-loom weavers?—Because there is a very great variety of fabrics that has been woven by hand that they are now weaving by power; almost every week the power-loom is making encroachments on the hand-loom, and supplanting the hand-loom in one fabric or another, and that to a very great extent. It is not long since all fustians have been made by power, as well as printing cloth. The whole printing cloth used to be made in Blackburn and Preston by hand-loom: there is no such thing made there now. What is to become of all these weavers? They are employed on other work.

2026. But is there not a demand now for all the weavers that are willing to weave the 60-reed cambric?—No.

2027. How long has there been a scarcity of work?—I think the scarcity of work has not been felt till perhaps within the last month or six weeks.

2028. Then there has been sufficient of employment for how long a time back until within the last six weeks?—Last autumn and winter there was plenty of employment; the slackness of demand for labour has only taken place within the last month or six weeks.

2029. Then there was plenty of employment at the time you have been speaking of, but still the wages did not rise when there was that abundant employment?—No, they have not risen; in some fabrics they have risen, as I stated before; in a fabric of the first and second and third qualities of seventy-fours there is a very great advance. The first quality, which was in 1828 and 1829 paid 1*s.* 1½*d.* a piece for, was in the early part of 1832 paid 1*s.* 4½*d.* for, and the latter part of 1833 and the beginning of 1834 it was paid 1*s.* 6*d.* for.

2030. Is that a description of cloth that you yourself either now or have been engaged in the manufacture of; is it a description of cloth which does come into competition with the cloth produced by the power-loom?—Many people are working this same quality by power.

2031. Now are you aware whether the wages the weavers receive for weaving that cloth, and which is wove to a considerable extent by power, are better or worse than the wages of the six-quarter cambric weaver in your employ?—I think they are about the same; I do not think there is much difference in them; they are higher in proportion now, but they have already, as I stated before, begun to reduce them. The parties that are making this cloth say 2*s.* is higher wages than can be permanently

permanently obtained, and they hold out great inducement to power-loom manufacture at that price.

2032. Then they are higher now, the cloths with which the power-loom does compete, than the fancy articles, the cambrics and the fine goods, which are wove by hand-loom?—No, not higher, but higher in proportion than what they generally are; this has advanced from 1 *s.* 1 ½ *d.* to 2 *s.*; now there is nothing in fancy goods which has advanced in the same proportion.

2033. Can you give any opinion what number of pieces a weaver can weave a week of that cloth for which you say he is now paid 2 *s.*?—I should suppose he would weave about four pieces.

2034. You only speak from information you have received that the weaver of third seventy-fours can weave four pieces a week?—I have that from Massey & Son, who are the largest makers, I believe, of this description of cloth, and the only house that has not reduced the wages at the present time.

2035. Do you know the number of shots that this cloth has in the inch?—I think it is about 80, the best quality, but I only guess at it.

2036. But the quality for which 2 *s.* is paid?—I think it is about 80.

2037. And how do you know that that cloth with 80 shots in the inch was ever wove for 1 *s.* 1 ½ *d.*?—I have been told so, and I have no doubt it was so.

2038. But were you told,—because your information rests on what you have heard,—were you told this cloth has 80 shots in the inch?—I was not.

2039. Do you know what the width of that cloth is?—No, I do not; it is a cloth that is very well known in the trade.

2040. You have seen the cloth, of course?—Yes.

2041. Is it 27 inches wide?—It is what I think they call 27.

2042. Now you have stated a weaver could weave cloth up much faster if it were only 48 inches wide than he could if it were 52 inches?—Yes.

2043. How much faster could he weave up the cloth of 27 inches, supposing the number of shots in both cases to be the same?—I do not know; for the cloth that we warp 38 inches and the cloth that we warp 50 inches I think we pay one about 4 *s.* 6 *d.* and the other 6 *s.* 9 *d.*; in that proportion the same quality of cloth in the different widths.

2044. For the same number of shots in 38 inches you pay 4 *s.* 6 *d.*?—Yes.

2045. Whereas you pay 6 *s.* 9 *d.* in the 50 inches?—Yes, I think it will be about 5 *s.* for 38 inches, and 6 *s.* 9 *d.* for 50 inches.

2046. You have stated that you know nothing of this third seventy-four weaving, except from the information you have received from Massey & Son?—Only by report.

2047. And that you do not know whether this cloth has 80 shots in the inch or not?—I do not know the quality of that; I merely adduce that to show the great advance in wages, from 1 *s.* 1 ½ *d.* to 2 *s.*, with 60, 70 or 80 shots in.

2048. Now, you have stated also that you manufacture yourself a description of cloth 38 inches, for which you pay 5 *s.*, which has the same number of shots as 48 inches, for which you pay 6 *s.* 9 *d.*?—Yes.

2049. Is it 48 inches or 52?—Fifty inches we warp it now.

2050. Are not the young children more generally employed upon the narrower cloth, that is the 38-inch, than the 50-inch?—Yes, they are.

2051. Do you know any child of 13 years of age in your employment that would weave this 50-inch cloth?—No, I do not, for I have paid very little attention to that department for the last seven years; my junior partner attends to it; and on that account I exceedingly regret that I was summoned in detail.

2052. Do not you think 50-inch cloth too heavy work for children of 13 or 14 years of age?—Yes; I have answered this several times before.

2053. Then they are generally employed on the narrow width?—Yes.

2054. For which a less wage is paid?—At less per piece, but perhaps equally good wages.

2055. You have stated there would be some difficulties in the plan proposed for getting the average of wages in consequence of the difference in the manufactures which pass under the same name?—Yes.

2056. Are you aware that the seventy-four cloth, as it is called, is distinguished by first, second and thirds?—Yes.

2057. And I believe an inferior quality to the thirds?—Yes.

2058. Could not the same distinction be made in the manufacture of these different fabrics which now pass under the same name, in the muslin and fancy depart-

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ment, if it were requisite to do so?—No doubt a regulation of that sort would tend very much to equalize, and perhaps to reduce the great variety of makes.

2059. Then that difficulty is not insurmountable?—No; I have stated before I did not think it was insurmountable; it will be attended with a great deal of difficulty.

2060. But do not you think it is worth some little difficulty on the part of the manufacturer to keep up the wages of the weavers?—I do not think it is worth while, from a full conviction that it is impossible to benefit the weaver's condition; and I give it as my opinion, that if you were to advance wages 10 or 50 per cent., that a greater amount of money would not be paid to the hand-loom weaver for weaving, because the power-loom is competent to weave at least one-half of the various fabrics that are at present wove by hand, not only better but cheaper.

2061. You have already stated there are a few power-looms engaged to weave the fancy articles that you manufacture, the 60-reed cambric?—I believe to a very small extent.

2062. Now, have you any idea of the proportion the 60-reed cambric bears to other hand-loom wrought goods in the borough of Bolton?—I fancy there are very few wove in Bolton at all of 60 reeds by power; I think they are woven by Horrocks of Preston, and I think they are woven by a Heywood house, also Jones & Burton are weaving that cloth; but that is attended with more difficulty than the lower quality of cloth, and therefore while the manufacturer has profitable employment for his looms, that require less attention and less skill, of course he follows that which pays him best; but what I mean to say is, that where there is so great an extension of power-loom going on at present, that they will be likely to branch out, and take up many fabrics that are at present wove by hand.

2063. Are you aware that the silk trade hand-loom weavers are also badly paid?—I believe they are.

2064. Are you aware that in the linen trade they are also badly paid?—I do not know anything about the linen trade; I fancy they are.

2065. Have you heard whether any power-looms have been introduced and persevered in for the manufacture of silk?—I have been told there are, but I do not know it for a certainty, nor could I name the parties that are weaving by power.

2066. Then do you think that the power-loom can have been the cause of this depression in wages where the depression has taken place in a description of manufacture where the power-loom has not been brought into operation at all?—We know that the whole of the people that wove fustians have been driven to another fabric; we know that the whole of the people that wove printing cloth have been driven to another fabric; we know that the whole of the silk weavers in Manchester were formerly cotton weavers, and therefore, though there may be certain fabrics which the power-loom may not at present have been brought to bear upon, yet I think it is but fair to presume that it will in the course of time be brought to bear on those fabrics; we know that all the weavers that are now weaving silk in Lancashire were cotton weavers but a very few years ago.

2067. Are you aware that in Spitalfields the wages of the silk weavers have been reduced from 16*s.* to 8*s.* since 1826?—I do not know anything about Spitalfields; I have no information relative to it.

2068. But the wages of the silk weaver, provided an advance was made to him, bringing him back to 16*s.*, which it was in 1826, would not prevent the consumption of silk, would it?—Yes; and it would increase the importation of foreign silks, I should suppose.

2069. Provided no measure was taken to counteract that?—I think no measure can be taken to counteract it.

2070. But why?—It would only tend to a greater degree of smuggling.

2071. But is it not possible to prevent that?—It never has been done.

2072. Are you aware that there was such an Act for the protection of weavers passed, which went by the name of the Spitalfields Act?—Yes, I have heard of it.

2073. And that during the operation of that Act the wages of the weavers kept up, when the wages of the weavers in the cotton district, where they had no Act to regulate them by, declined?—Why was that Act abandoned?

2074. But are you aware that that is the fact; that is the question?—I was aware there was an Act in Spitalfields; but I was not aware of the comparative wages of cotton manufacture with silk in Spitalfields during the operation of that Act.

2075. You are not aware that the wages of silk weavers were maintained while the wages of the cotton weavers were depreciated; you are not aware of that fact?—I am not; I cannot speak to it.

2076. Now you have stated there was a difficulty in getting returns; it might be observed, suppose returns were made in the manner which you have stated to be practicable, and the wages were fixed by a regular rate established among the manufacturers themselves, could any manufacturer complain of the oppression of such a measure?—No, of course not, except the general principle; as it applied equally to all, all would be subject to the same.

2077. You gave it as your opinion that if such a measure was adopted, it would have a tendency to drive poor manufacturers out of the trade?—I think it would have that operation.

2078. What is your reason for thinking so?—Because they generally pay lower wages than regular manufacturers.

2079. Is that beneficial to them or to the trade at large?—I cannot say whether it is beneficial to the trade at large, but they individually exist by it; that is, a small manufacturer looks after every particular branch himself, and he can raise or fall his price without attracting observation. The larger manufacturers are forced to carry on business through the medium of servants; and if they were to raise or fall the wages, it would at once become known through the whole district, and the smaller manufacturers will reduce the wages without its being generally known, perhaps, for some time.

2080. Have you known any reduction of that sort take place within these four or five years by the small manufacturers, which has not been followed by the larger manufacturers?—I cannot exactly speak to it; that may have been the case sometimes; I dare say it has; but if the distress continues any time, it then goes through the whole.

2081. Have you known that to be the case that distress has continued so as to compel, or at least to lead the more respectable manufacturers (those of larger means, if they may be called more respectable) to adopt the reduction of wages, the example of which has been set by those of more limited means?—No doubt that has been the case always when a general reduction has taken place.

2082. Then does the small manufacturer gain any advantage by taking this course?—No, he does not; not if he is followed by all the others; of course the man that has the least stock suffers the least, as it reduces the value of his stock in proportion to the reduction.

2083. If the manufacturer gains no advantage, how would this man with small means be injured by the operation of such an Act?—I do not know that he would be. I say in reply to that, I answered before that a small manufacturer can frequently reduce the wages, and does frequently reduce the wages, perhaps, some time before it is generally known, or before it is generally followed, or perhaps it is not followed at all.

2084. Do you think, after he has made this reduction, that he undersells the better paying manufacturer in the market to the extent of that reduction?—No question. The reason why he reduces his wages is, he perhaps frequently sells first; he is limited for means; he wants money to pay wages, and he sells his cloth at the best price he can, and then, perhaps, after that he will reduce.

2085. Then the operation of this man of smaller means is injurious to those possessing larger means, and to the weaving body?—Yes, it is.

2086. Then is it most desirable that the power of regulating wages should be given into the hands of those who are desirous of maintaining wages?—I have answered before that I should, under no circumstances, be friendly to it; and under the present circumstances, when we are pressed so much with foreign competition, for we ourselves, as an individual house, are supplanted in the Dutch market, in the Belgium market, in the German market for several articles of our manufactory, and also in the American market, with coloured goods, to a considerable extent; and when, as I stated before, yarn can be laid down in the foreign market at from 2 ½ *d.* to 3 *d.* on the Manchester price, and a labourer can support his family for one-third or one quarter of what he can do in this country, I think that is sufficient to show us the great competition; and then power-looms, you are well aware, are encroaching very much, indeed, except they were to lay a tax on power-looms.

2087. Then is the trade in which you are engaged in such a state that it cannot be carried on for any length of time without sacrificing the comforts of the weavers?—With

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—With respect to the comforts of the weavers, my decided opinion is that wages cannot advance, and therefore I think he is the weaver's friend who would lead the weaver to get any other employment. I asked the question, why is there at least 25 per cent. of looms standing in Bolton, and only 10 per cent. in different parts? my manager replies, because there is a greater variety of other work at Bolton; for instance, he named two or three of our own weavers, one had got employment at Mr. Hicks's new foundry; and that two or three children that were weaving for us were also going to other employments, perhaps in a machine establishment: and that is the way he accounted for a greater proportion of looms standing in Bolton than in country districts, and there is a less variety of other employments.

2088. If the looms have been standing, as you represent, what has become of those who worked these looms?—They have got other employment, as I have stated before; formerly a great many of the looms were worked by journeymen, and there is hardly such a thing as a journeyman to be found anywhere now, because those men instead of going into a poor man's house and working on his looms, go into a power-loom mill, where they have more comfort, and perhaps earn 3*s.* or 4*s.* a week more.

2089. Now there have been advertisements put out in Bolton for 1,000 weavers within the last 18 months?—There are frequently advertisements; if a man wants 50 weavers, he sticks out an advertisement that he wants 500 or 1,000.

2090. Then if there be advertisements put out that weavers are wanted, how do you make out then a scarcity of employment?—That is at particular periods; some time ago weavers were very much wanted, now they are not so. We are subject very much to sudden fluctuations. Perhaps two or three manufacturers may have orders to execute in a given time, and they make a great fuss about it, and advertise for weavers; but in very flat times there are no advertisements for weavers.

2091. But when advertisements are out for weavers, for 2,000 or 3,000 hands would not the public think that work was abundant and that weavers were scarce?—Yes, they would.

2092. Was it a fact that work was abundant and that weavers were scarce when these advertisements were put out?—Yes, I dare say it was, because there has been plenty of work till within the last four or six weeks.

2093. Then when the work was superabundant and the weavers were scarce, how do you account for it that no manufacturer would give notice that he would give an advance of wages?—Why, because the profits are so very close; if a man had given 10 per cent. advance wages, perhaps the profits were so small on what he had taken the order for that it would not be worth his while to make the goods. The thing was different 10 years ago; we used to reckon nothing of advancing wages 1*s.* or 2*s.* or 3*s.*; we were determined to have weavers because profits were good. Now, business is so closely done, that if a man gives 6*d.* extra, it takes away his profit, and therefore he says, "It will not answer my purpose to make the goods; I will not make them at all."

2094. Then was it fair of some manufacturers, or a small number of manufacturers, reducing the wages again, provided an advance was made that induced him to offer an advance when he advertised for weavers?—Yes, but then his profit would not afford it; I conceive that the principal business is done so very close at present in hand-loom weaving, that if a man were to give an extra 6*d.*, that would be 3*d.* a demi, perhaps that would be the very outside of his profit.

2095. But supposing there had been a regulation in full force at the time, and a person wanted 2,000 weavers and advertised for them, and advertised an advance of 6*d.*, do you think he would have been afraid to do so if he were satisfied he could maintain the advance?—Of course not; if he were satisfied he could maintain the advantage he would not.

2096. And could he not have maintained that advance but for the interference of those who would take the lead in reducing wages?—No. Because if the market gets overstocked, people cannot go on to manufacture beyond their means, and reductions would take place from one means or another.

2097. But you have already stated, that to raise the wages would cause a less production?—Yes, it would.

2098. Then, would not a rise naturally follow in the market the less that reduction?—No, because an advance of wages will bring in more labour. If you pay a man 5*s.* or 10*s.*, a man would work less at 10*s.* than he would at 5*s.*

2099. Where would the hands be obtained from?—From agricultural districts, and people that are employed in different employments.

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2100. You mean in an employment that does not afford so good a profit?—Yes. I do not know where the men come from, but an advance of wages does increase the number.

2101. You have stated there was a deficiency of labourers in the factories; does that apply to the hand-loom weavers in the factories?—Yes; hand-loom weavers can work in power-loom mills. There is a power-loom mill at Bolton that is not full; there are a great many that are deficient.

2102. You have stated the wages of the weavers in the power-loom factories are pretty much the same as in hand-loom factories?—No, much better.

2103. Then what is the reason of the deficiency?—They do not like the hours, or some may not like the noise.

2104. How many looms will one person attend to in a factory?—Two, and in some instances to three.

2105. Then, supposing they attend to two looms, how much will they get?—They will get from 10 *s.* to 11 *s.*

2106. How much more work will those two looms produce than the same weavers would produce at a hand-loom?—Four or five, and sometimes six times as much. It was stated in evidence here, I see, that the hand-looms and power-looms have two distinct provinces; they do not interfere with each other; nay, that the power-loom rather assists the hand-loom; that is Mr. Makin's evidence. I will tell you how it assists; it assists in taking the man from the hand-loom, where he weaves one piece, and puts him to the power-loom, where he weaves five, and therefore it assists in that way.

2107. So that the proportion of increase of power-looms diminishes the number of weavers five times?—Yes.

2108. Are you a power-loom manufacturer?—At present I am not; we have power-looms making.

2109. Then does it rest on information you have received that a weaver can weave six pieces by power?—Sometimes five and sometimes six.

2110. That a weaver can weave five pieces on the power-loom, whereas he can at the same time only weave one on the hand-loom?—If he wove factory hours he would weave a third or fourth as much by hand as by power.

2111. What description of cloth is it?—I am speaking of 50-reed. A gentleman that I consulted stated that his weavers would not average more than about a piece a week on the hand-loom; they could do more, but he says they do not; and they will average six generally working on the power. Now I find that the power-loom wages are about one-third; they pay for an article by power 2 *s.* 6 *d.* that would be 7 *s.* 6 *d.* by hand; that, from all inquiry I can make, is as near as possible; it is generally admitted that a man will clear 2 *s.* or 3 *s.* a week more by the power than by the hand, and therefore if he can get 25 or 33 per cent. more by power than he can by hand, at one-third the wages, it shows about this proportion of wages.

2112. In the 50-reed cloth what number of shots are there in an inch?—110 or 112.

2113. The piece about 24 yards long?—Yes, 24 yards.

Veneris, 10 *die Aprilis*, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Robert Gardner, Esq. called in; and further Examined.

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2114. HAS the plan proposed for taking averages and obtaining returns by schedules of inquiry come under your notice; and do you think it is practicable?—I have read it over; I think it might be practicable, but not without much difficulty; it will be attended with a great deal of difficulty, from the cause stated yesterday, the great unceasing schedules of variety.

2115. Suppose the first average struck on *A. B. C. D.* and *E.*, manufacturers in the township of Bolton, making one-half the sixty-reed cambrics in that township, and that *A. B.* and *C.*, a majority of one in the five, are paying the highest wages; suppose *A.* to be paying 6 *s.* 6 *d.*, *B.* 6 *s.*, and *C.* 5 *s.* 6 *d.*, the average of the three would be 6 *s.*?—Yes.

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2116. And 6*s.* would be declared by law to be the lowest price any manufacturer in the township of Bolton should pay for cambrics?—Yes.

2117. The prices of neither *A.* nor *B.* being altered by such a law, could they with any fairness, or would they complain of its operation?—I do not say that they would have any reason to do so.

2118. Would they not rather approve of its operation, because it would bring up *C.* and the other manufacturers to pay the wages *B.* had been paying?—As a present measure it would be acceptable; I am decidedly opposed to the principle, but as a present measure they would be pleased with it.

2119. *A.* and *B.* would be pleased with it?—Yes.

2120. Inasmuch as it would bring up *C.*, who was paying 5*s.* 6*d.* to 6*s.*, which *B.* was paying, and to within 6*d.* of what *A.* was paying?—Yes.

2121. Well, but could *C.*, who by this law would have to advance his price on weaving cambrics from 5*s.* 6*d.* to 6*s.*, or any manufacturer paying a larger price than *C.*, with any fairness complain of this law?—No.

2122. Which only required them to pay what *B.* had voluntarily paid before the law came into operation?—No, certainly not.

2123. Neither *C.*, nor the manufacturers who were paying lower wages, could with any propriety complain?—No.

2124. Now, before this return, you will see that *A.* had by a voluntary act of his own established for himself a higher price for weaving cambrics by 6*d.* per piece than the law, when it came into operation, required him to pay; and therefore *A.* might, if he wished, reduce his price 6*d.* a piece before another return was called for?—Yes.

2125. Would not the controlling power to regulate wages thus be given to *A.*, the highest paying master, unless some other manufacturer, eligible from the quantity of goods he made to come into the next return, advanced the price to more than 6*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

2126. Then *A.*, being the highest paying master, would obtain the control of the regulation?—No question about it.

2127. If a manufacturer so eligible, that is to come into the returns, did advance to more than 6*s.* 6*d.*, would not *A.* be pleased to see it, and gladly follow the example?—No doubt he would. You know every man is influenced in bringing up the lowest paid man to the higher; those that are making the best cloth must advance; the operation then would be, if they are paying 5*s.* 6*d.*, 6*s.*, and 6*s.* 6*d.*, when the 5*s.* 6*d.* is brought up to 6*s.*, the one that was paying 6*s.* to 6*s.* 6*d.*, even *B.* might make a further advance, and the tendency of that measure would be a continual advance; because a weaver would say, "*C.* is not so particular about his cloth as you are, and therefore he only pays 6*s.*, and you may still retain your situation; you must pay 6*s.* 6*d.*, and the 6*s.* 6*d.* man must pay 7*s.* to keep his quality of cloth;" because it would affect each of them.

2128. Then you think the effect would be to advance wages?—No question about it; it must be so.

2029. But suppose no one can advance beyond the average, and *A.* to remain stationary at 6*s.* 6*d.*?—That is not probable.

2130. But suppose no one can advance beyond the average, and *A.* to remain stationary at 6*s.* 6*d.*, the next return would give an average of 6*s.* 2*d.*, bringing up the price fixed by law to 6*s.* 2*d.*?—Yes.

2131. Every succeeding average would do no more than raise the price to those of *B.*, except by the voluntary act of some manufacturer who was inclined to advance wages; do you think such an interference could in any way injure any manufacturer or any weaver?—The operation of the Bill would be as I stated, it would advance them 6*d.* up; and every advance would be greater than 2*d.*, it would be 6*d.* instead of 2*d.* That is the operation of the Bill; I give it as my opinion.

2132. Now do not you think that that is desirable?—No, I do not, decidedly. I spoke as strong as I could yesterday. I am decidedly opposed to the principle. It is the subject of a good deal of discussion in Manchester, and many people made the observation to me before I came up, that it was a ridiculous measure.

2133. Was that the general sense of the meeting which sent you here?—No question about it; every individual I have spoken to thinks it so.

2134. Then you were not at the meeting?—No, but every one I spoke to after the meeting. The meeting had appointed me to go to be examined by this Committee.

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2135. Did they give you any instructions as to the opinion they wished you to express?—I objected to the thing decidedly. There was a committee of seven requested to wait upon me at six o'clock again that night, and that was the only party I had any communication with; those seven, or perhaps there was a dozen altogether, that took some interest in it, but they conceived that such a proposition would not be attended to by the House, and therefore they did not think it worth their while to go to any trouble to defend it.

2136. But have you reason to expect that those seven people who formed that sub-committee expressed the sense of the general meeting which appointed you?—Certainly I do.

2137. And those seven persons you could fairly infer were unanimous, or were they, generally speaking, against the Bill?—I think to the extent of about 12, 14, 16 or perhaps 20 manufacturers that have spoken to me, from its being announced in the papers of Saturday I was appointed to go up; and therefore when I met people in the street, they shook hands with me and congratulated me upon the errand I was going about.

2138. But it was intimated through the boroughreeve that a gentleman opposed to the principle of Mr. Fielden's Bill was desirable to be sent up?—I was not aware of that when I was appointed, or else I should perhaps have said I was not so much opposed to it as some others, for I am exceedingly anxious to benefit the weaver if I can; I should be second to no man in that. The weavers on one public occasion, 16 to 20 years ago, fixed the sixty-reed to be 28*s.*; at another meeting some years afterwards, they reduced it to 20*s.*; at another subsequent meeting of perhaps seven years ago, they fixed it at 14*s.*

2139. What the Committee wish to know is, whether the understanding of the meeting was in appointing you they were appointing a person who was probably hostile to the weavers?—They only guessed at that, for I did not see Mr. Maxwell's letter and did not know the purport of it: they took for granted I was against, as all are I have spoken to, and that I was to go up and be examined.

2140. Do you know the number that attended the meeting that was called by the boroughreeve?—I should think there might be 300 to 400 people altogether.

2141. Masters?—No, among them there were I should think a great many weavers; I do not think there were above 20 masters; I think perhaps there were not above 15, at least that I knew.

2142. Did they pass any resolution?—I am not aware of that, for the business of the meeting was over, and they announced to me the boroughreeve was about to leave the chair, that I was unanimously appointed. I protested against the thing as not being able, and the rest I have repeated. I do not know the resolution; all that I learned was by the papers afterwards. I am not an individual that attends public meetings, or take an active part in town's business or public business of any sort; I generally attend to my own business, and do not interfere with public business. There were very few people there that I knew; there were a great many strange faces; there were about 12 to 15 manufacturers that I knew.

2143. Now you have stated that this plan is practicable, and that it would throw the power of regulating wages into the hands of weavers?—I do not know I said it would place it in the hands of weavers.

2144. Or else into the hands of some other persons who would pay higher wages than weavers?—Yes.

2145. Then it would take the controlling power out of the hands of *C.* and those who paid lower wages than *C.*?—No doubt.

2146. Now do you think that any injury could arise either to the manufacturers or to the weavers, by entrusting the power of regulating wages in the hands of those manufacturers disposed to pay good wages, and taking it out of the hands of those who availed themselves of every opportunity to reduce wages?—I observed before, it would be pleasing to those that pay high wages to have the others brought up; but at the same time I understand the Act to have the power to advance but not to reduce. I do not understand the Act to embody any board of masters or any other, to reduce the wages; but it has one tendency; as, for instance, it is given in evidence here that 5*s.* 6*d.* is the price paid for a certain description of cloth; at that time we were paying 6*s.* 6*d.*, we are now paying 6*s.* 9*d.*; Horrocks, Jackson & Company, of Preston, (and a more honourable house we have not in the country,) are paying 6*s.* 6*d.*; and of course, put those three together, 5*s.* 6*d.*, 6*s.* 6*d.*, and 6*s.* 9*d.*; it would raise the average: very well then, if those people at 5*s.* 6*d.* were brought up to 6*s.* 6*d.* the weavers would say

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"No, you must still keep your station; you were paying 1 *s.* 3 *d.* above so-and-so, and you must go so much higher, or else we cannot weave for you, for those paying 5 *s.* 6 *d.* are less particular about the cloth; they are not so nice whether there are the exact picks in or not;" therefore the tendency would be to raise not 2 *d.* but 6 *d.* every time.

2147. But would the weaver saying the master must do so, compel the master to take that step, unless he thought it to his advantage to do so?—It would be his interest to do so.

2148. Then a rise would be thus effected with the concurrence of the masters paying the best wages?—I admit it.

2149. I ask you whether that would operate injuriously, either to the manufacturer or to the weaver; either to a manufacturer of small means or of large means?—It would, in my decided opinion, act very injuriously both to the manufacturer and to the country at large.

2150. Then your objection to the plan is not so much to the regulation, but that it prescribes an unalterable minimum of wages?—I object to the principle, as I stated yesterday, and I wish to do it again, on account of the foreign competition; not less than a dozen individuals have come from Holland, from Belgium and from Germany, this year, that have been in the habit of buying of us regularly certain descriptions of goods; this spring they said, "We cannot now buy so-and-so, the Swiss people cut you out; we cannot buy so-and-so, the Saxon cuts you out;" and therefore I adduce these reasons to show that an advance of wages would drive away that portion of manufacture that is still left.

2151. That is supposing the minimum prescribed by this Act unalterable; by supposing the higher paying masters had the power to alter that minimum, would you have the same objection to the Act?—Yes, I should; because respectable masters would always be governed and influenced by what weavers could live upon, and they must of course, as men of common feeling, raise the wages considerably, and would, I have no doubt. If this thing had been in operation perhaps 20 years ago, I think it might have been beneficial to the country, because it would have prevented wages going down so low as what they have done; and I am of opinion that if wages had never gone so low as they have been, the protecting duties of foreign countries would never have been so high; that is my decided opinion.

2152. To what countries do you refer, when you speak of the protecting duties?—The Americans, Germans and different foreign countries; I am alluding now to 20 to 25 years ago. My objection to this system is because of the foreign competition on the one hand, and the great increase of power-looms on the other.

2153. But if the minimum was not unalterable, and the higher paying masters had the power of altering that minimum or lowering the minimum: you have said already that there is a power in bad hands already of controlling their wages?—Yes.

2154. The effect of this regulation of placing that power in the higher paying masters, instead of the lower, would be merely a transfer of power; the lower paying master has the power now and exercises the power without an Act of Parliament: supposing the minimum not unalterable, this regulation places the power in better hands than where the power will exist, whether Parliament interferes or not?—Yes; and that power, in my opinion, would be exercised to the prejudice of the country. Men would be influenced, as I said before, in fixing the wages, considering what a man could support his family for; and it would raise it so high that it would at once cut off that branch of our foreign business with Europe. At this time, I beg to state distinctly, the hand-loom manufacturers are in a very bad situation; most of them have very heavy stocks, and most of them at this time are curtailing manufacture, in consequence of not being enabled to make sales; and I have no doubt, in the course of a very short time, there will be a general reduction of wages, in consequence, of the hand-loom weavers, partly foreign competition and partly from the power-loom. When you take into consideration the very great demand there is for yarn at the present time; yarn is absolutely scarce in our market, and the whole of the parties that are supplying the manufacture trade, they say it is quite anomalous; we find that our friends in the manufacturing interest are not buying at all, and yet yarn is absolutely scarce; what is the cause? Now, if you take into consideration the export of yarn, (I am speaking of the export,) that while there is a very great export demand, the yarn is absolutely scarce; the manufacturers are doing comparatively very little, and I think my

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opinion will be backed, in the course of a month or two months; we shall see a general reduction of wages, in my opinion.

2155. Then do I understand you to entertain this opinion, that if the controlling power of regulating wages was placed with the high paying masters, that the trade in manufactures is such, that such a regulation and the placing of power in such hands would be injurious to the country?—I do, decidedly.

2156. Now will you state how it would work injuriously?—I have stated already it would tend to the great and more rapid increase of power-looms. There is such a spirit of enterprize and such great improvements taking place in power-looms, that I have no doubt of their capabilities, to say the least of it, to weave one-half of the different fabrics that are now woven by hand; and they not only make them cheaper but better than what they can be made at the present wages. The next is the foreign competition. This great and increased export of yarn every year that takes place; they must do something with it; they must make it into cloth, and I have given you instances of competition. The Americans are going, very extensively, into the French market for their coloured goods; the dye is cheaper, and the yarn is coming so much near the price of ours, that they are buying very extensively, both in France and in Saxony, such goods as they used to buy altogether in this country.

2157. Then I understand you to entertain the opinion, that it would work injuriously, because it would raise wages?—Yes, I have answered this many times.

2158. You assume that?—Yes.

2159. And you have stated your reasons for it to be these: that those who are now paying the higher wages, being pressed on by those who are paying the lower wages being brought up to them, would advance?—Yes.

2160. And that this advance that would take place in the wages of the weaver would operate injuriously to the country, because of that advance?—Yes; but that advance, if we had no foreign competition, would work beneficially. I wish clearly to be understood; I am not opposing an advance of wages on the principle of opposing it; but I say we are so much pressed by power-loom and by foreign competition, that I gave it as my opinion yesterday, that one-half of those weavers that are now employed must be dispersed and find other employment within seven years from this time.

2161. Then it is because of the advance that would be made, we will say, for instance, from 6*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* by the high paying master, that you make out that it would be injurious? it is because of that?—Yes, because every advance would tend to give our competitors power over us, and every advance of wages would tend to the great increase of power-looms. I wish clearly that we may understand each other; I do not want any wrong impression to go abroad about it. If we had no foreign competition I would go with you as far as you please. I again repeat I would be second to no one; and I am anxious that no wrong impression should go abroad in the country on that account. I feel for the weavers, and I have given proof of it.

2162. And it is on that account that I wish to ascertain your opinion clearly, that it may be clearly stated in evidence so, and that no wrong impression may go abroad. I will put it in another way: the controlling power being then placed in the hands of the higher paying masters, why do you assume they would advance to the injury of themselves, and have competitors in the trade? why do you assume that?—I assume it as a matter of course; because, why do I pay 6*s.* 9*d.* now for what another man pays 5*s.* 6*d.*? do you suppose it is out of love to the weavers I pay that 1*s.* 3*d.*? Nothing of the sort; it is because I am more particular in the quality of my cloth.

2163. Now are you, in paying the 6*s.* 9*d.*, paying a higher wage than the man paying 5*s.* 6*d.*?—I do not say that we are paying decidedly a higher wage; I say that we are more particular in our cloth, and therefore it merits higher wages, and on that account I assume that I must still progress; and therefore every average, instead of rising 2*d.*, will rise at least 6*d.*

2164. But would not the effect be this: the manufacturer who is now paying 5*s.* 6*d.*, when he was brought up to your standard would be as particular as you were, and endeavour to get as good goods made as you do?—I dare say he would be more particular; no question about it.

2165. Then would not that bring back a greater uniformity in the rate of wages than now prevails?—It would.

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2166. Then after this greater uniformity was established, why do you assume that either you or any other of the manufacturers would raise the wages, unless they saw it their interest to do so?—No man would raise his wages except from interested motives or compulsion; I am quite satisfied about that; but if a man will keep up his character for superiority of cloth, he must pay a higher price than the mass.

2167. Then would not that tend to correct an evil which now prevails among the weavers themselves; would it not make them more careful in the work which they executed, in order that they might be employed at the best price?—I think it would improve the quality; but the same motive now exists.

2168. Then if the quality were improved, would not that give an advantage both in the home market and in the foreign market?—Yes, of course it would. It would be advantageous, but at the same time I think that hand-loom cloth would never be equal to that of power.

2169. Now you have expressed a fear lest, from the control of wages being placed in the hands of the high paying masters, that an evil would arise; you yesterday, in your evidence, stated, that Massey & Son, of Manchester, held 65,000 pieces of cloth, for which they had been paying 2 *s.* a piece for wages?—Yes, without enactment.

2170. You stated also, that some of the manufacturers had already reduced three-halfpence each?—Yes.

2171. And that Messrs. Massey & Son would become compelled to follow that reduction with that stock now on hand?—Yes.

2172. Now would there be any impropriety in Messrs. Massey & Son having the control of keeping up these wages of 2 *s.*, instead of suffering them to be reduced to 1 *s.* 10½ *d.*?—If they had the control, they would use it, I have no doubt of it.

2173. And would the use of it operate beneficially to those of smaller means, or to the trade generally?—I will give you their own reason; they say 2 *s.* is a higher price than can be permanently maintained, as they can be made so much lower by power. That is the reason they give. If they had the power, they would exercise it.

2174. You also stated yesterday that it would be better to curtail the quantity of work given out than to reduce the wages?—As a temporary thing it would. If an article is paid 2 *s.* for, and it is afterwards reduced to 1 *s.* 6 *d.*, every weaver must try to weave more, and it adds fuel to the fire; but if the price was not permitted to go lower, people would make less quantities; and though it would have a beneficial effect upon the weavers, and upon the individuals who hold stocks, because every stock is reduced according to the wages; these 65,000 pieces are 1½ *d.* or 3 *d.* reduced, just as the wages are; and therefore it would tend to curtail the quantity and benefit the country. The market would sooner recover itself.

2175. Then it would work beneficially, inasmuch as it would curtail the quantity, and the price would sooner be restored—Yes.

2176. Is not that in itself a good which this Bill would work out?—It is a present good, no question about that; but is it good for the country?

2177. But one of the objections you have stated to this proceeding is the competition of the power-looms?—Yes, and foreign competition.

2178. But one of the objections is the power-loom?—Yes.

2179. And you threw out a hint whether it might not be taxed?—Yes.

2180. Now, would not the best way of taxing this power-loom, in order to accomplish the object which you state, that is, reduction in the production, be to lessen the time of that power-loom being worked?—In reply to that, you asked me yesterday as to the time of power-looms: you well know yourself the great part of the cost of all goods woven by power is the wear and tear, the expense of machinery, and interest, &c.; and therefore, if you produce one-twelfth less, or an eighth less, or whatever portion less, it increases the cost of those goods in the same ratio; and therefore I am not an advocate for reducing the hours of the power-loom shorter than 63 or 64 hours per week.

2181. Am I to understand you from that, that the power-loom at all is one of the causes of the distress of the hand-loom weavers, yet you would not interfere with it, or limit its operation to any less time than it is now allowed to work?—I think it is now at 69. I say I signed several petitions for 63.

2182. Well now, for instance, suppose it was reduced to 48 hours in a week instead of 69, would that lead to a lessened production of goods?—No question.

2183. Would that lead to an increased demand for goods produced by hand-loom?—No doubt it would.

2184. And would it lead to an advance of the wages of the hand-loom weaver?—I believe it would.

2185. Then would it not be better that these machines, that neither consume food nor clothing, should be stopped in their operation, and reduced to 48 hours a week, than that this suffering among the hand-loom weavers should continue?—If we had no competition, it would.

2186. No foreign competition?—If we had no foreign competition, it would. But I charge this depreciation of wages on the power-loom manufacturers, and not on the hand-loom manufacturers, they have nothing to do with it; it is in consequence of the great increase of power-looms, of which Mr. Fielden has a considerable portion; and therefore I think the odium of lower wages belongs to him, and not to me or hand-loom makers.

2187. But would reducing the operations of the power-loom to 48 hours a week instead of 69, do away with that of which you complain, that is, that the power-loom has compelled you to reduce wages?—It would improve the wages for a time; it would unquestionably improve hand-loom wages considerably, I have no doubt; but when they are working long hours in a foreign country, and pressing so close on our heels, meeting us in so many foreign markets, the question is, is it policy to do so?

2188. Now, you have assumed that because a rise in wages would be the consequence of the operation of this proposed Act, that it would injure those who have to compete with foreigners in foreign markets?—No doubt it would.

2189. Now, how do you make it out that it would injure them?—Why, I have replied to that before.

2190. That is, because it would raise the price then of the goods in this market?—Yes.

2191. Now, has the rising of the price of cotton from $5\frac{1}{2}d.$, which it was in 1831, and from $6\frac{1}{4}d.$, which it was for many years, that is from 1826 to 1832, has the rising of the price of cotton to $11d.$, which it now is, has that put a stop to the manufactures?—Is not the price of cotton equally high in every country? That does not at all bear on the question: if cotton were $11d.$ here, and $5\frac{1}{4}d.$ in another country, then it would be a fair question, and it would illustrate what you are attempting to get at.

2192. But does not the increased consumption of it in this country tend to raise that price, both here and in other countries?—No question; but it is not the increased consumption of it, as I show you by this list, in this country, but it is in consequence of an increased demand in the foreign countries, where they can weave at a less price than we can; and it is that competition I am complaining of. If the export of yarn is increased so rapidly, do they burn it or eat it? No, they make it into cloth.

2193. What is that increase?—I hand you this list. (*Paper given in.*)

2194. Are you aware of the number of pieces of this very description of cloth which you say Messrs. Massey & Son are making, of the number of pieces they have now to give for 300 lbs. of cotton, and of the number they had to give for a series of years prior to 1826?—I have never calculated; I have never given it a thought; I beg to decline answering that; I cannot give an opinion upon it.

2195. But suppose it could be shown to you that they have for these two years been giving 35 pieces for 300 lbs. of cotton, and that from 1822 to 1826 they were giving that which would average less than 23 pieces; suppose that could be shown to you to be true, would you think that it is wise on the part of those engaged in the trade in this country to pursue a system of foreign trade which now compels them to give 35 pieces for 300 lbs. of cotton, whereas in the former period they got 300 lbs. of cotton for 23 pieces?—I say, if formerly you could do a business at 50 per cent. profit, and now it is reduced to 20 or 10 or 5 per cent., it is still advantageous to follow it; you must first show us we are doing it at a loss before we abandon it.

2196. Have you not stated these goods are now being manufactured at a loss, and that to make up this loss they are attempting a reduction in wages?—As soon as people cease to gain a profit upon them, they will either cease to make them, or reduce the wages. I cannot enter into the calculation of Massey, or any other individuals, to know whether they get a profit or not; but they tell me the

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profit is very small, 1 *d.* to 3 *d.* a piece; and therefore they were at once affected; and a person will not continue, if he is a man of property, he will not continue to do business at a loss. I know it has been stated by some people the country has lost 150 millions by our foreign business the last 40 years. A friend of mine told me (a relation of Mr. Ficlden) that the country should let their foreign trade go; that they have lost 150 millions within the last 40 years.

2197. When the production was a great deal less than it is now, take for instance the year 1826, when the cotton consumed in the country was 12,000 bags a week, and it is now 18,000 bags a week, had not the manufacturers better profits; and had not the weavers better wages; and was not the foreign trade in a more healthy state than it is now?—It might be better for some and worse for others.

2198. Do you know the wages you paid for your cloth in 1826, that you now pay 6 *s.* 9 *d.* for?—In 1826, I think about 8 *s.*; that will appear I think by the document that I put in.

2199. In the statement given in by Mr. Makin, of the wages?—No, by my own. (*The Witness referred to the document.*) In 1825 we paid for that article 9 *s.*, and in 1827 it was 7 *s.*, in 1830 it was 5 *s.* 6 *d.*, in 1834 and 1835 it has got to 6 *s.* 9 *d.*

2200. You have not there 1826?—I have not 1826; 1826 would probably be 8 *s.* or 8 *s.* 6 *d.*

2201. In 1825 it was 9 *s.* you say?—Yes.

2202. In 1826 you think about 8 *s.*?—About 8 *s.*

2203. And in 1827, 7 *s.*?—Seven shillings.

2204. Then with your foreign trade that we have, and that increase, the wages of the weavers have gone down from 8 *s.*, which was the price in 1826, after the panic, they have gone down to 6 *s.* 9 *d.*, your own wages?—Yes, our own wages.

2205. And during this time the increase in the consumption of cotton has been what I told you?—Yes.

2206. Then has the foreign trade worked advantageously for the weavers?—I would reply again, those wages have been more reduced by power-looms than by foreign competition. But I would beg, in addition, to say, that we have had little to dread from foreign competition perhaps seven years past, but they are getting on most rapidly; we begin to meet them in various foreign markets, and especially this last spring; and from the increased rate in which they are taking yarn, we are likely to become more serious opponents every year.

2207. If those engaged in hand-loom manufacture have lost, should not the effect of the power-loom, and this increased foreign trade, have been to have made that branch of business in a better state?—I assume that the power-loom trade has been a very profitable trade, or there would not be so great an increase as is taking place now; I believe the increase in power-looms will be greater this year than any two previous years.

2208. Then, notwithstanding this increase, and this distress arising from it, you cannot make any advantage arising from this foreign trade?—It is a question that I hardly understand; I have no doubt that there is considerable profit left in the country after all.

2209. Now you perhaps know a description of cloth made by power, which passes under the name of 72 power-loom cloth?—Yes, I have heard of it.

2210. Do you believe that that forms the greatest bulk of cloth manufactured on power-looms?—I really do not know; I should suppose that fustian cloths perhaps is the greatest.

2211. But do you know it is a very important branch of the manufacture on power-looms?—I believe it is.

2212. Now, in 1824, the manufacturer on this power-loom had 9 *s.* 9 *d.* for making one piece, and in 1832 and 1833 he had 5 *s.* 5 *d.*?—I do not know that.

2213. What the price is at present I do not know; but not much above that, if any. I do not know the price they are selling for now; but the effect then of the increase by power-loom, and the quantity kept up by the hand-loom manufacturer, has been to reduce the wages to the state they are in, and the manufacturer by power-loom from 9 *s.* 9 *d.* to 5 *s.* 5 *d.* for making the piece since 1824?—The power-loom manufacturers, that feel so much for hand-loom weavers, should stop the looms.

2214. How, with that statement before you, can you make out in any way that this foreign trade, pursued in the manner it is, is advantageous to this country?—

I do

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I do not think it is important for me to answer that. There are many gentlemen at this table much more competent to give an answer to that question than I am.

2215. Are you yourself engaged in the foreign trade; in the export of your own manufactures?—I am.

2216. Then you are competent to give us information as to the rate of profit derived from foreign trade, on a comparison of what it was in former years when less was produced, with what it is now?—I think that the foreign business is paying rather better than it was.

2217. Do you consider yourself competent to judge of that?—I am, as far as I am myself individually interested. I would not go to give an opinion about any other house.

2218. Now, when the manufacture of this country was one-third less than it is now, had you a better foreign trade than you have now?—No.

2219. Do you get more profit for exporting the same quantity of manufactures now than you did when one-third less was produced?—I think we do, but I might give an explanation upon that; perhaps I understand it better now than what I did; and, another thing, there is less accommodation given by agency-houses who have establishments abroad. I think the great accommodation that was given to any person that would ship goods, advancing one-half or three-quarters, if a man was going to ruin he accepted that advance, and shipped his goods. I attribute a better profit in the foreign business to that more than any thing else.

2220. What are the goods that you export; are they plain goods or fancy goods?—Both plain goods and fancy.

2221. Have you any complaints of the foreign markets being overstocked in any part of those countries to which you export goods?—Ever since I have been in business, I have known no period in which some of the foreign markets have not been overstocked.

2222. Has the market being overstocked in this way had any influence in reducing the prices in those markets?—Of course.

2223. Has loss arisen which has involved many individuals that you have known in bankruptcy, in consequence of their pursuit of foreign trade?—Not very recently; some time ago, about the panic, a great many failed.

2224. What panic do you allude to?—About the year 1824 and 1825; it commenced at the end of 1824.

2225. Have you heard of no failures since that period, of men embarked in these foreign transactions?—Comparatively few.

2226. Have you reason to believe that any of the markets you now send goods to are overstocked with such goods as you send?—I dare say they are, there is such a fluctuation; perhaps we send ten different articles, and one will sell at 50 per cent. profit, and another at 20 to 30 loss, because the one particular market is overstocked and the other understocked. Every gentleman engaged in a mercantile business of that sort knows he is subject to those fluctuations. We sometimes have goods sell at an extravagant profit, and other goods in the same shipment, which, in consequence either of the goods being out of fashion or the market overstocked, have sold at a loss; but taking the average, there has been no doubt a profitable result.

2227. Do you think that if power-looms were reduced, you would be able to obtain better prices in these foreign markets?—No question about that.

2228. Then a reduction in the time of working the power-loom, upon higher wages to the weaver, which would also reduce their production, would operate beneficially to those engaged in foreign trade?—For the present I have no doubt it would, but there is still foreign competition; if there was no foreign competition, I would go with you any length. I have no doubt if the power-loom was reduced to one-half the time it would have a very beneficial effect on hand-loom weavers; no question about that; but that would only be for a short period.

2229. Would it have the effect of increasing the manufacturing abroad?—Of course it would. I have given in evidence, that if the power-loom was done away it would not improve the hand-loom weaver at the end of seven years, because the foreign competition would have come forward to supply what the power-loom weaving is supplying now. That is as clear as that two and two make four.

2230. You mentioned that a very great increase has taken place in the export of cotton-twist of late years?—That is shown by the table I put in.

2231. But if I understand you right, the export of manufactured goods has not

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kept pace with the export of cotton-twist?—It has not, especially hand-loom manufacture.

2232. I understand that you and the manufacturers generally are opposed to a legal enactment for a minimum rate of wages?—I am, and most that I come in contact with.

2233. Do you think it would be possible to fix a minimum price of goods in the market?—Certainly not.

2234. And does not the price of wages that you can pay to your men depend on the price of the goods you can get in the market?—It does.

2235. You have spoken of the competition of a foreign country; have you any information about the manufactures of America?—I am told that they are increasing rapidly; we have it from the people in the American trade, and especially from our agents that purchase our cotton; they state that the increased consumption of cotton in America will be 50,000 bags this year over and above the last. The increase in the consumption of cotton by the American manufactures is estimated at least at 50,000 bags this year, over and above what it was last.

2236. Then how much do you think the consumption will be in America this year?—I cannot say.

2237. Have you seen any patterns of American manufactures in Manchester?—I have not.

2238. Now, suppose that the employment of power-looms was diminished to 48 hours in a week, would not that enhance the price of the produce of the weaving?—No question about it, because a very considerable portion of the cost of a piece of goods depends on the wear and tear and the interest and the expenses connected with it. For instance, I would state that the power-loom wages are generally about one-third or a little more than one-third of the hand-loom wages, and therefore those two-thirds go to those various expenses.

2239. Then, what would be the effect of that enhanced price of our goods in the foreign markets that would result from a diminution of the hours of employing power-looms?—It would increase the price at which we should be able to sell them, we must have a higher price, and so far it acts as a bounty on the foreign manufactures, and stimulates them to increase.

2240. Now we are regretting the low rate of wages given, I fear necessarily, to hand-loom weavers, but taking the whole cotton trade together, do you think there ever was a time when wages were given to so great an extent, and rather fair wages, to cotton-spinners, machine-makers, and builders of factories, and to the numerous trades that depend on the cotton trade?—I would reply to that, that there is an advance of almost every description of workmen's wages except that of weavers; every other description of wages is increased, and I should think, in 1834, that the wages of Lancashire far exceeded those of any other year; because there was a great demand for all sorts of labour except weavers, and an improvement in theirs, which shows the advanced wages that have been paid. For instanec, I named yesterday one of the articles which there has been so much discussion about, calicoes; I am not speaking to the quantity of weft put in those calicoes, but in that article alone, since 1829, the wages have been raised from 1 *s.* 1½ *d.* to 2 *s.*

2241. And I believe it is your opinion that the hand-loom weavers are, by degrees, going off to other and more profitable employment?—They are. I give it as my opinion, and I thought a good deal of it yesterday, that the number of hand-loom cotton weavers are reduced within the last 10 or 12 years one-third. I do it from this: at Stockport, Dukinfield, Staley Bridge, Hyde, Gee-cross, Oldham and Heywood, where the inhabitants are almost exclusively employed with power-looms, I should think there is only one in ten of the hand-looms at this time weaving cotton. Then at Bolton, I stated also it was the opinion of my manager there, who I think is as likely to have correct knowledge as any one, Makin, the secretary to the weavers' committee, that there is full 25 per cent. of all the looms standing at Bolton for want of journeymen. He gave it as his opinion from 10 to 15 per cent. in other parts of the country were standing; he also agreed in saying he believed there had not been a single new loom made the last 10 years. Then, when you take into consideration, the removals and seizures, and the breaking up and waste of those looms, I think any gentleman with those views will come to very near the same conclusion, that the reduction is one-third. And I give it as my decided opinion, that the discussion of this subject tends much to agitate and raise expectations that I think can never be realized, and leads to much loss of time. We

ourselves

ourselves find the country weaver produces a great deal more work than the town weaver, who knows nothing of these things, and I think the best friends to the weavers are those who would deal with them faithfully, and encourage them to disperse and get other employment as quick as they can; and if the Legislature can do anything in the way of providing for their children, to apprentice them to different mechanical trades in which there is a great scarcity of hands, I think it would be rendering the weavers a most essential service.

2242. Now, with respect to the removal of labourers of any class, do not you think that where labour is in excess and wages low, that a man fulfils a most important duty if he removes with his family to a part of the country where wages are dearer, and employment is more in demand?—No question of that.

2243. You alluded yesterday to Hyde, Staley Bridge and Ashton; have you known those districts some years?—Yes, I have.

2244. Do not you think there has been a great improvement in the condition of the people in those districts within the time you have known them?—No doubt of it.

2245. And do not you think in the Vale of Todmorden there has been a great improvement in the condition of the people?—No doubt of it.

2246. Now, with respect to the foreign trade, do not you think we may rely on the sagacity of the merchants and manufacturers of this country to carry it on while it is lucrative, or promises to be lucrative, and to stop when there is a loss?—No question about it. I would beg to say, look at our situation at the close of the war, taking the debt of Europe on our shoulders, and what has enabled us to do? Is it our soil? If our soil is so superior to others, we must have some secret veins where people are digging up the wealth. It is our commerce that does it.

2247. Then if bankruptcies occasionally occur among foreign traders, you think there has been a great profit on the general foreign trade of the country?—There is no question there has been profit.

2248. You stated that if foreign competition was removed, you thought a plan similar to that suggested by Mr. Fielden would not be impracticable?—I think not.

2249. Supposing this country was paying a high rate of wages, and in consequence of the high rate of wages the cost of the articles produced was very much increased, and that other countries, for whom we cannot legislate, did not adopt a similar measure, would not the consequence be, that they would produce articles so much cheaper that they would meet you in your own market?—No doubt.

2250. Then foreign competition has a double action on this question?—Yes.

2251. And setting also aside the question of foreign competition as though it did not exist, would not all the operation of the power-loom weaving still continue in this country?—No doubt of it.

2252. And produce the same result?—Unquestionably.

2253. And must not invariably that machinery, whether of hands or of other instruments, which produces the greatest quantity of goods at the lowest price, must not that, in the natural course of things, throw out of the market all that machinery, whether human labour or not, which produces a smaller quantity at a higher price?—No doubt of it.

2254. Then, when you have said that this plan of fixing a minimum rate of wages is practicable, you do not say it will be practicable generally?—I have stated before, it would have a temporary good effect.

2255. Then you think, on the whole, the ultimate result would be to increase the distress?—I think with respect to protection, that the coach proprietors on the Liverpool road might as well apply for an interference of Parliament because the rail-road beat them off the ground. I think also the owners of sailing-boats on the river Thames, (when I lived in London there were no steam-boats,) they might also apply for protection against the steam-boats, exactly upon the same principle, as the cheapest article will always supersede the dearer.

2256. Is not the question one of uniformity of wages; is that a question which could by any possibility be made to bear; is there not always something in the manner in which the work shall be done, which might on all occasions enable a manufacturer and a weaver desiring to defeat the law, so to defeat it?—It would be impossible to adopt an exact uniformity either in wages or quality, but it might be brought much nearer than what it is at present.

2257. Would a legislation, such as has been suggested by the honourable

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Member, increase or diminish the understanding between master and man?—I think it would tend to decrease the misunderstanding.

2258. You said you thought that profit must have happened, in consequence of the increased production and the increase of the export?—No question about it; I urged that from my own experience, and from the great principle that people will not follow up a losing trade.

2259. Did you not say yesterday, that the increase of production might very easily come from adverse circumstances, in consequence of the desire of manufacturers to work up an increased quantity of goods, in order to obtain a greater number of profits from a greater quantity of transactions?—No; I think I said that the increase of cloth might arise from adverse circumstances, or from a reduction of wages; for if I am paying 2 *s.* for an article, and I reduce that to 1 *s.* 6 *d.*, if a man feels his own interest and that of his family, he will of course work harder to obtain as near the former wages as he could, by a greater quantity of work.

2260. And that would increase the production?—It would.

2261. You said that upon the general principle that men will not go on in a trade unless they obtained profit from it?—No doubt about that.

2262. And upon the same principle men would enter, generally speaking, into trade, provided they saw a profit in it?—Of course.

2263. And still you say that the weavers who are not sufficiently employed and not sufficiently paid now, object to go into the machine-making trade; into the power-loom, where they can obtain better wages?—With respect to machine-making, you know a weaver can be of no use. I would beg to state in reference to that, to meet the question, that a man that is perhaps 40 or 50 years old, I do not see what he could turn to except he could get some better paid employment that requires no mechanical skill; but I almost question whether they are sufficiently anxious to bring the children up to some other business than weaving.

2264. Did not the Committee understand you to say that there was a great demand for men in the machine-making in the factories?—Yes, but then a weaver is of little use in a machine shop.

2265. I think you stated that there was a great demand for workmen in machine-making and in the factories?—I did, for children in factories, not spinners. Perhaps you know a few years ago there was for a time a great many turns-out of the mill hands; the spinners turned out; for instance, I had one of my establishment out six months; each twice within two years. In consequence of that turn-out the number of spinners was vastly increased, because every spinner under those circumstances is anxious to make as much of that labour as possible, to teach fresh hands; in consequence of which, I apprehend for a few years back there has been a greater number of spinners out of employ than perhaps almost any other description of hands; spinners, not the inferior hands.

2266. The Committee understood you to say that the efforts that were making by certain parties to relieve the hand-loom weavers, rather induced them to leave the hand-loom weaving trade and to enter into those trades where there was a greater demand for their labour?—I do not know that I stated that; I beg pardon; I say that the agitation of this question leads the weavers to expect something very great will be done for them in legislative interference, rather induces them to live in expectation of something being done, and takes them from their work.

2267. And you added, it prevented their going into other trades where there was a greater demand for labour?—I think it has that effect.

2268. What were the trades you alluded to?—I cannot define any particular trade.

2269. Have many mills been erected lately, within the last two or three years?—There are a great many erecting at present, and there were some, not so many in number, last year, but some very large ones, and there are a great many in the course of erection now.

2270. Is not that the cause of the deficiency in the number of labourers for making machines?—Yes, it is.

2271. And do you consider that the building of new mills is likely to be progressive at the present rate?—If we can have a supply of cotton at a reasonable rate, I think that our trade may and will still be greatly increased.

2272. Did not the Committee understand you to say yesterday that the scarcity of workpeople in the mills was only of children, and not men; that there was an abundance of men, but not children?—I did state there is a superabundant supply of spinners.

2273. And

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2273. And of men generally, but a scarcity of children?—Yes.

2274. Because you spoke of a scarcity of hands in Lancashire to-day; that had reference to children, and not to men?—I either stated or meant to state, that there was a scarcity of all descriptions of hands in mills, except those of the spinner; I also stated or meant to state, that there is a great scarcity of mechanics, and I think there will be no prospect of machinery that is at present wanted, being completed at the time promised, for want of mechanics.

2275. You stated that foreign competition is now much more dangerous to you than it was seven years ago?—Yes.

2276. And in fact that you are trembling for a profit?—We feel it more.

2277. You stated you object to any interference with the supply and the demand for labour or for hours of labour?—Certainly.

2278. And yet you yourself were an advocate for restricting the hours of labour to 66 hours per week?—With respect to the labour of adults, I would let them work all night if they like; my restriction of labour only refers to children.

2279. Then your objection to restricting still further than 66 hours is foreign competition with regard to those hands which are essential in the factories; those under 18, I suppose you mean?—Yes; extend the 63 to 66 hours.

2280. You would restrict them to 66 hours a week?—Yes; I think it is as much as they can bear. I would not restrict anything or touch anything, if it were not for the protection of children.

2281. You object to restrict further than 66 hours per week, because you fear you will be driven out of the foreign market in consequence?—I do.

2282. Supposing the foreign competition were to press still harder upon you, and make it desirable for you, to make a profit, to increase the hours of labour from 66 to 70 or 76 hours per week, what should you say to that?—I would give up the foreign trade then.

2283. Then the capacity of hand-power may be called the criterion of the foreign trade, rather than foreign competition?—With respect to that, I think I answered before, I would place no restriction upon any adult; the restriction should go no further than children. Every man that is competent to make an agreement for himself knows what he can bear.

2284. But is it not the fact that the most essential hands in a factory are those under 18?—No, not the most essential; they are very important hands; but the hand I should think most essential, is the spinner himself.

2285. Have you any table to put in with respect to the increase of exports of cotton yarn, and the total quantity of cotton yarn produced, exported and consumed in Great Britain from 1818 to 1834 inclusive?—Yes, I beg to put in that, in reply to that question.—[*Handing in a Paper.*]

2286. From this table, it appears that the quantity of yarn exported was 14,745,000 lbs. in 1818, and in 1834 was 81,335,000 lbs.?—Yes.

2287. You have stated as two of the main causes of the reduction of the wages of the hand-loom weavers, the introduction of the power-loom, and the foreign competition?—Yes, I have.

2288. Do not you think that one main ingredient in the cause of reduction of the wages of the hand-loom weavers is the increase in the export of cotton yarn?—Yes, it is that which has produced the competition; they could not compete with us, unless we supplied them with yarn; if we had retained the manufacture of the yarn instead of exporting it——

2289. Do you think the hand-loom weavers would have been so much reduced in their circumstances as they are now?—Certainly not.

2290. What do you think mainly conduced to the commencement of the system of exporting cotton yarn, rather than retaining it for our own manufacture?—I do not know; the evil was there; we should have maintained the manufacture longer in our hands, if yarn had not been exported: but the foreign nation seeing, or at least supposing, that was the secret of our wealth, they adopted it. But as the machinery connected with hand-loom weaving is comparatively of no value to that of spinning, if we had not permitted them to receive the cotton yarn, they would have been a much longer time in becoming manufacturers and competitors.

2291. Do you think it was not rather a necessity in the first instance in the manufacturer which drove him to export the yarn, as well as the manufacture?—Probably it was; I am not familiar with the origin of the export of yarn; it has been

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been considered by many a very great error; whether it was or not, I do not know.

2292. If it has had the consequence of reducing so suddenly the circumstances of hand-loom weavers, it probably was a very great error?—I think that the Continental manufacturers would not have been in their present state, perhaps for 50 years to come, had it not been for the export of yarn.

2293. I observe here that the quantity consumed at home in 1818 was 84 millions of pounds, and in 1834 was 191 millions of pounds?—Yes.

2294. What is meant by the consumption at home; is it that which is manufactured at home?—Yes.

2295. And it includes all that which is exported after it is manufactured?—Yes, it is the home manufactured. When you look at that table and take into consideration the immense increase of power-looms, it will show you a great decrease on the hand-loom weaving.

2296. Now, would you prefer, (you are against the principle of interference at all, but if you had to choose between what you would consider two evils,) would you prefer boards of trade or the plan suggested by Mr. Fielden?—I can hardly give an opinion; perhaps boards of trade might be better.

2297. Do you see any objection to a periodical publication of the rate of wages, and the quantity of cloth made by each manufacturer of each sort of goods, without fixing any minimum of wages?—No, I see no objection to it; some people think that the less we publish of those things the better; it is only information for the foreigners; but I think they understand the thing pretty nearly as well as we do, therefore I do not think any evil would result from it.

2298. Do you think it would cause any serious injury, if the Bill proposed by Mr. Fielden were to be tried as an experiment for a year?—It would cause a considerable deal of trouble to the manufacturers, and I have expressed my strong feeling upon it; I think its operation only for one year would be attended with considerable trouble to manufacturers, to make all those returns.

2299. But with the idea that if it succeeded it was to go on, it would not appear so much trouble for so little worth?—My own opinion, as well as the opinion of those I have spoken with, is, that there would be no probability of its ultimate success.

2300. Could the parties that composed that table have the means of ascertaining the quantities to be correct?—They could get it from the Custom-house returns.

2301. That is, the exports?—Yes.

2302. What do you consider to be the proportion of the quantity of goods exported at the present time, or last year, or the year 1818?—I cannot say.

2303. Do you think there has been an increase?—A very great increase, an immense increase.

2304. It appears from that table that the increase in the export of yarn has kept progressing since the peace in 1815?—Yes.

2305. Do not you think it is likely it will continue to increase as long as Europe is at peace?—No doubt of it.

2306. From the circumstance of the governments of those countries looking after the employment of their own population?—Yes; and they would spin also if they had capital; I conceive they would make the same progress in spinning as they do in weaving; but, as I stated before, the machinery connected with weaving is of very little value; the spinning machinery is expensive.

2307. But you are aware spinning is increasing on the Continent?—Yes, I am aware of that; but not at all in proportion to their wants.

2308. You said something of the policy, which was considered correct by many persons, of prohibiting the exportation of yarns; will you just say whether it is your opinion that it would be impossible to prevent foreigners from getting spinning machinery the same as ours; could you have prevented the Germans and the Americans and the French from establishing spinning machinery the same as ours?—No; they do get machinery by one means or another; they get patterns; almost every new machine is got out of the country by one means or another.

2309. Did you ever hear that the Americans have improved cotton spinning so that some of their inventions have been introduced at Manchester?—Yes, that is the case.

2310. Then, where would have been the use of prohibiting the exportation of cotton yarn, if the foreigner would be able to construct machines, and to spin that

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yarn himself?—That was not the case; when yarn was first exported we did not know the Americans as machine-makers, nor did we know the Continental powers as manufacturers; but I do not advocate prohibiting the shipment of yarn.

2311. But from the time that spinning was first introduced into this country, could not foreigners with a very little arrangement have got possession of all our inventions for spinning?—No question about it; at that time we were at war with them, that would throw obstacles in the way; but as goods both in war and peace have been smuggled, I believe they ever will be smuggled so long as there is a heavy protecting duty or prohibition.

2312. I dare say you are aware that some years ago the emigration of machine-makers and mechanics was prohibited by law?—It was.

2313. But are you not aware that a great number left this country notwithstanding that law?—They did.

2314. Then, in fact, from the time of the invention of Arkwright and others introducing spinning machines into this country, there never would have been any insuperable difficulty in the way of foreigners getting possession of our machines?—Certainly not.

2315. Was not the cause of our being enabled to export yarn to such advantage our advance in machinery, and our advance in the possession of capital, which other nations did not possess to so great an extent as we did ourselves?—No question of it.

2316. Then, in fact, that was the cause of our being able to commence exportation to such advantage at that time, which other nations did not possess?—No doubt of it; and I conceive that the wealth of this country is attributable to the manufacturer.

2317. You observed that the foreign trade had interfered with the home trade during the last year; I wish to know to what you attribute the foreign trade interfering with the home trade, during the last year?—I do not say it has interfered more in proportion than any other; but I spoke of my individual house, and I did that to show that the great quantity of yarn they were receiving from this country they were manufacturing into cloth, and they were competing with us in foreign markets. I stated that the present season the Dutch and Belgian buyers, and the Germans, have ceased to buy several fabrics of cloth from my house that they have been in the habit of buying every previous year; and they say, "we can buy these goods cheaper from the Swiss or the Saxon manufacturers." They show samples of what they are purchasing, and they say, "if you can charge them as low as this, we will still buy them of you;" but we cannot, they undersell us.

2318. Do the 69 hours or the 66 hours you spoke of refer to the power-loom?—To the power-loom as well as the spinning machinery.

2319. You say, if the time for using the power-loom was limited, that the hand-loom weavers' condition would be benefited for a time?—No question.

2320. But that the foreign trade would increase?—No doubt.

2321. Would not the increased employment of the hand-loom weavers go very far to supply the deficiency that the power-looms formerly manufactured?—Yes, but would neither make the cloth as good or as cheap as it had been by power; therefore that would tend to encourage the foreign manufacturers. We might hold up the price only for one year; we might have to regret it. We find by experience, if we lose a market one year, we lose it altogether. It is not well to trifle with trade; by trying some of our experiments for only one year, we might effectually injure our demand, and shut ourselves out. Once in possession of our market, they would keep it.

2322. Would not the increase of hand-loom weavers' wages add to the profits of the power-loom manufacturers?—No doubt of it.

2323. Would not that immediately throw more capital upon power-loom manufacture?—I stated that already; there is no question about that; the people say it would rise the power-loom weavers also; so I believe it would; but if a man produces one piece by hand, he would produce four by power; and therefore, if you were to give him 1 *s.* a piece advance upon the hand-loom, it would be only 3 *d.* on the power.

2324. Would not, then, the result of that be to lower the hand-loom weavers' rate of wages to a point lower than from which it started?—No doubt; and I give it as my opinion that that must be the case; if the weavers do not get other employment, their wages will be lower than what they ever have been. I also give

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it as my opinion, that if you were to add 50 per cent. to hand-loom wages, a greater amount of wages would not be paid in five years than at present.

2325. It would sow the seeds for future distress?—That is my view of it.

2326. You say that the weavers who live in the country do more work than those who live in town, in consequence of those who live in town agitating the question of wages?—They attend more to work.

2327. Do you attribute that entirely to the agitation of the subject of wages?—The truth is, they do not mix together so much. In all towns they are either agitating the subject of wages or some other political subject.

2328. But have country weavers no possible means of existence independent of weaving?—Yes; a great many of them are little farmers, and have a few acres of land, and keep a cow or two; but not the whole of them.

2329. You stated that if power-looms were more universally adopted, the hand-loom weaver, if he got employment on power-looms, would produce four pieces where he now produces one?—Yes.

2330. Would that be an advantage to the manufacturer, and to the weaver, and to the country, or otherwise?—Yes; it would be an advantage to the country.

2331. Would it be an advantage to the manufacturer and to the weaver?—Yes, it would be an advantage to the weaver, because he would get more wages on power-loom than he would on hand-loom weaving, as well as to the manufacturer.

2332. Then if it would be advantageous, would it not, in your opinion, be desirable to have that advantage accomplished in as short a time as possible, in order to remove these hand-loom weavers?—The sooner it is accomplished the better, of course. I conceive that if the whole of the hand-loom weavers could be employed upon power, they would receive better wages than they will do by hand; but if the whole of the hand-loom weavers at present were employed on power, they would produce four or five times, or perhaps six times as much work, and that would overstock the markets.

2333. Is any such other employment within the command of the hand-loom weavers?—I have stated before that there is not a great deal of employment for men that have been brought up to the hand-loom weaving, and perhaps got to the age of 40, 50 or 60 years; a man of that age has his habits fixed, and he is fit for nothing but what he is brought up to, and therefore, no doubt, there would be great difficulty in getting other employment. I stated already, several of our own weavers got other employment in a new machine establishment, one as a porter, another to go of errands, and another, I think, to superintend a little department; a man that could write could do that. It is impossible for me to point out how they could get individual employment.

2334. You have stated that there is a scarcity of hands to go into the mills?—Yes, of the inferior.

2335. You have stated also that the scarcity of hands is a scarcity of children?—Yes, children and young people.

2336. And that there is a superabundance of men?—Yes.

2337. Then is the trade of this country now placed in such a state that it can only find employment for the young hands, and leave the parents that should support those young hands unemployed?—There is a superabundance of weavers and spinners. I believe if you could make one-half of men weavers into mechanics of various sorts, they would find full employment; but you know that is impossible; neither you nor I could turn machine-makers all at once.

2338. Do you recollect that in the year 1833 a very great number of mills in Lancashire were working only four days a week?—Yes, I do.

2339. Have you any reason to assume that a similar occurrence may not again soon arise?—I dare say it will; there is so much capital and so much enterprise, that we always go by extremes in Lancashire; we never do things by halves.

2340. But did you not also state that the profits were so low, that it was not possible for the manufacturer to advance his wages?—In hand-looms it is very bad at present.

2341. Are there any profits attached to the working of spinning machinery on power-mills, such as to enable the manufacturers to give an advance of wages?—I assure you I am in a very bad reed, for I am a fine spinner.

2342. What number?—One hundred and forty; sometimes 220.

2343. Has there been a great increase in the demand from France for those high

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high numbers?—No; we are a little disappointed in the demand from France. Then at another mill I spin from 140 to 200. I am a doubler also there. At another establishment, at Preston, we spin for our own hand-loom manufacture; we spin there from about 70's to 120's; and I am altogether in a very bad reed. This year the great demand is for coarse fabrics, for distant countries; our demand from France, Belgium, Holland and Germany has fallen off, which took the finer quality of goods; but the great increase is in the coarse fabrics for the more distant districts, China, the East Indies, the Brazils, and South America.

2344. The high price of cotton, if you were to go into the market, would be rather against you, would it not, if you were to buy your stock now?—We could not go into the market for fine cottons, and spin the yarn and sell them at a price to obtain the cost for any number below No. 180.

2345. Then your own experience in your own business leads you to know that your branch of spinning is not profitable?—It is not at present; certainly not; but we hope to have our turn.

2346. If your own branch is unprofitable, and you have only information from others, may that information be incorrect, and their profits be also low?—It hardly can. I can give the best reason of all others for it; there is nobody increasing in my line, and there is a great many in yours. Nobody is preparing fine machinery; every one is turning his fine machinery into coarser numbers that can.

2347. Does not a low rate of profit rather tend to an increase of production, in order to make up in quantity what is lost in quality?—I do not think it does. I think if the profits are small, people do not feel disposed to invest or make any great outlays in machinery.

2348. But were not the profits before 1826 much larger, both for the spinners and manufacturers, than they have been since?—Yes, and what was the cause?

2349. I just ask you the question; you say "Yes," and follow that up by another question?—But you should permit me to give my reasons for it. I say that previous to the panic, profits were large; and when the panic came on, there were actually 100 mills within 30 miles of Manchester that were either just built or in the course of building, or contracted for; and that was one of our wild extravagancies; it was over done; in consequence of which, for many years the spinning trade did not recover, and it did not recover itself till within the last two years; and now, because it has recovered and become profitable for a time, we are going to be as wild as ever.

2350. But taking it further back, during the war, were not the profits much larger during a period of 20 years than they have been ever since the war?—Generally speaking, I believe they were; but before the war I knew nothing about it, for it was before my time. I believe, the business was much smaller then, and the profits much greater; but I also believe if the profits of the whole country had never been greater since the war than they were before, we should never have been in the position we are.

2351. What is your reason for thinking so?—Because on account of the taxation, and the national debt, and those various things, we never could have met with the profits that we had previous to the war.

2352. But during the war, when you say profits were greater than they have been since, the consumption of cotton never reached to more than 6,000 bags a week?—I do not think it did.

2353. In 10 years after the war had ceased, the profits being considerably diminished, the increase in the consumption of cotton was double, and became 12,000 bags a week?—Yes.

2354. That was with low profits during that period?—I dare say profits then fluctuated, as since.

2355. Now, since 1826, when the profits had been still further reduced, the consumption has increased to 18,000 bags a week?—Yes.

2356. Does not that fully convince you that low profits are favourable to an increase of production, more so than high profits?—I doubt whether there has been low profits; I do not think either you or I can say we have had low profits, and therefore we might as well be honest.

2357. But have not you said that one of the reasons why wages cannot be advanced is, from the absolute state of low profits; and that when the manufacturers in Bolton were advertising last year for 2,000 or 3,000 hands, they were prevented from raising the wages though they wanted the hands?—And that is my reason for opposing your measure altogether; the hand-loom trade is really bad,

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bad, and I attribute it entirely to the introduction of power-looms; we know well enough when there is a very great and sudden improvement on machinery it acts as a very great evil on the hands it supplants, though it afterwards does good to the country; I stated to the weavers, at the time they were breaking power-looms, "These are the best friends you have; they (the power-looms) will ultimately improve your condition."

2358. And you have found it to be so?—Yes; because wherever there is a great capital sunk in machinery, hands must be employed. If we do not want weavers, we do not employ them. The price of their heels and reeds is perhaps 10*s.*, and therefore we tie them up in paper, and put them by; they take no hurt; but when there is a great capital sunk in machinery, people must be employed.

2359. Will not these difficulties always arise, and suffering be the consequence of an increased production, unless those who produce participate in the advantages which ought to arise from that increased production?—I dare say it will.

2360. Then would it not be of the greatest importance that the wages, not only of hand-loom weavers, but of those employed in mills, should be raised to a certain extent, corresponding with that increase of production?—With respect to the thing I am speaking now of, fine spinning, I would almost change my 12 months transactions with the earnings of the spinners I have in the mill; we are subject to great fluctuations, and as I have repeatedly stated, I do not despair we shall have our turn.

2361. Then you have had 12 years' experience as a spinner?—When I first became a spinner, I think it was in 1824, I bought a mill, for which I paid 10,000*l.*; that I think about six months after was worth about 6,000*l.*, and simply from the panic, and the thing being over done.

2362. Now, do not the weavers sometimes embezzle a part of their materials?—Yes, that is very frequently the case.

2363. Is it not possible for the manufacturer to prevent it as the law now stands?—We have not found it so. The stolen materials may be seized by the officers; there was, I think, a seizure of nearly two tons in Manchester within the last three months; but the magistrates will not convict except you can swear to the property. Now, every gentleman here, acquainted with the business, knows you cannot swear to the property; you may be satisfied it is yours, but you cannot positively swear to it, therefore the magistrates will not convict.

2364. Could you suggest any means for preventing it?—I think there might be means; a less amount of evidence would be one great means; and I think that when a seizure of this sort takes place, they might call in a jury, two respectable spinners, and two respectable manufacturers, to examine it; and if they do not agree, call in an umpire, a respectable man, to be named for that purpose by the chief magistrate: because I should have stated before, that when a seizure takes place, a person will generally have an invoice of a similar description of yarn, which he has bought at some period from a spinner, and he swears that this is the yarn. There was a case last week, where the materials were mixed, some spun twist way, and some weft way, and different sizes and shapes of cops, which every one must know did not come from the same spinner; and if they decide that that is stolen property, the magistrates should convict without any appeal.

2365. As a jury?—As a jury.

2366. You think that would be sufficient to put a stop to the evil?—Yes.

2367. Has the traffic in embezzled materials a tendency to reduce wages?—Yes, greatly so. A weaver will steal yarn from me which has cost 3*s.*, and he will sell it to one of those dealers at 1*s.* per pound; he sorts that in the best way he can into its various qualities, and weaves it into cloth; he will bring that cloth into the market, it is wove again in reeds, and sold in the market at a low price, and will, in flat times especially, give a sort of currency to the market; and therefore it has a very serious effect in reducing wages. It is a very great annoyance to the honest manufacturer.

2368. Are all respectable manufacturers and weavers inclined to have this state of things put an end to?—I think the respectable weavers, even more than the manufacturer; I think they are more deeply concerned than the manufacturer, because they attribute a good deal of the suffering to that trade, and they are particularly anxious to have a stop put to it. But it is very difficult to convict, as I stated before, not being able to swear to the materials. In speaking about that, I would beg to refer to a part of my examination yesterday, where I spoke of little manufacturers. Mr. Fielden asked me repeatedly about little

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manufacturers. It might appear invidious, and which I did not mean to convey, because a man is a little manufacturer that he is not an honourable man or a man of feeling, or that he is the first to reduce wages. That was not what I meant; I did not mean to convey any such impression; there are many small manufacturers that are as honourable men as large manufacturers; but when I spoke of those small manufacturers, that class of men that reduce wages, I meant the dealers in what we call mooter or stolen property. It is those that are opposed, not only to the weavers, but to the trade altogether.

2369. You wish to set yourself right with the Committee on the subject of these small manufacturers?—Decidedly so.

2370. Have you anything further to add?—We feel a good deal of anxiety about the right of patterns not being protected. It would be a very important thing if our pattern right could be protected, that is, when we introduce new patterns, that they should be preserved to the inventor. That has also a great tendency to reduce wages. My manager gave me two or three instances. In 1826 we introduced a new style of cloth, for which we paid 36 *s.*; I would state, in the first instance, that a new article never advances in wages; I believe there can be no instance adduced of wages raised after the article was brought out. We introduced one particular class of cloth, which we paid 36 *s.* for; we had that exclusively to ourselves 18 months; then a second manufacturer put out the same at 34 *s.*; a third manufacturer put it out at 28 *s.*, and in 18 months that was reduced to 16 *s.* weaving, which is about the present price of it.

2371. Do you suppose that reduction would have taken place if you had had your pattern right preserved?—Certainly not. I believe if we had had the pattern right preserved, we should certainly have maintained the wages, because it is an invariable rule with myself to say to my managers, "Never starve the weaver; so long as you are not interfered with, never mind the wages; but always tell the weavers, by way of inducing them to keep this pattern from others; but as soon as any other manufacturer puts it out, if he should put out at 10 *s.* what we are paying 20 *s.* for, that moment reduce ours to 10 *s.* also."

2372. But if your invention was so curious that the public were determined to have it, do you think that the body of workmen generally would be advantaged by the working-up of it being confined to your particular factory?—I think it would; it is so in foreign countries, I believe, and I think it would be an advantage; it would be a great stimulus. We are very much behind the French in our patterns; I do not conceive it is altogether for want of taste, but in part want of protection.

2373. Then you think the way in which it would operate in favour of the workmen would be, that it would encourage masters more to endeavour to improve their patterns and enable them the better to come into competition with France?—Yes.

2374. You perhaps know that in France the same legislature which provides for the settlement of disputes between masters and men provides for the security of the copyright of the pattern?—Yes.

2375. And it interposes immediately in all cases of complaint, and recognises the copyright, and immediately puts a stop to any invasion of it; do you think such a tribunal, with local power, could be established in England in our manufacturing districts?—I think it might; I do not see any difficulty in it.

2376. I dare say you are also aware of the fact, that in a large town, for instance, the town of Lyons, of which the population is not more than two-thirds the population of Manchester, there is constantly about 200 students in the schools of art, solely occupied in obtaining that instruction that will enable them to produce patterns?—I was not aware of that; I know they are very much a-head of us.

2377. Do not you think the establishment of such schools would be a matter of very great importance, and have a very great effect in raising the whole character of our manufacturing population, if the more intelligent youth were so provided for at the public expense?—No question about it.

2378. In the town of Lyons there are 200 or 300 artists, who live solely by the production of new patterns, and who bring not only art but science into the manufacturing regions; can you tell how many individuals in Manchester are occupied in the same way?—There are none but the printers, I think; perhaps I am not correct, but I think the manufacturers scarcely ever employ them.

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2379. You do not put your designs on paper?—Yes, we put them on design paper. We are compelled to put them on that to put them in the reed.

2380. You do what is called pricking?—Yes.

2381. Is there any class of men in Manchester who gain their livelihood by being consulted upon applications of scientific principles to manufacturing improvements?—I do not know.

2382. In France there is a class of men who occupy a very eminent station in society, who are called manufacturing chemists, and who are consulted with respect to new colours; I should not say, "manufacturing chemists," "consultative chemists"?—We have the celebrated Dr. Dolthin in Manchester.

2383. Is there anybody besides him?—Yes, Mr. Davis, I think; and perhaps one or two others.

2384. They are consulted mainly on chemical points; is anybody consulted on mechanical points?—I think not.

2385. Have you anything more to state?—I could adduce two or three other instances of great inconvenience; that there are very little inducements to invent new patterns; for after inventing it, and putting it to work, which may cost 10 *l.*, 20 *l.*, or even 30 *l.*, our neighbour, who has been perhaps standing by, will get all the advantage after we have had all the trouble and anxiety about it. I would state another instance of a new pattern being gaited, for which we paid 18 *s.*, when it was immediately taken up by another man at 16 *s.*, and in about 12 months it was reduced to 8 *s.*

2386. By "gaited," do you mean intruded on?—No; we call it gaiting, putting it to work, commencing.

2387. But have you no protection for patterns?—None whatever. There is an article we have which has not been interfered with, a fancy article, that we have been working about five years; the first wages that were paid were 30 *s.*, and we pay 30 *s.* for it yet.

2388. Are these worked by hand-loom weavers?—Yes, they are all worked by hand-loom weavers. We paid 30 *s.* for the weaving it, and we are now paying 30 *s.* for it. Another manufacturer is now attempting to put it out at 24 *s.*, and it is very probable in the course of six or 12 months it will be 18 *s.*

2389. You are aware calico printers have protection for three months?—Yes.

2390. Would you think it advantageous if that protection were to be extended to your trade?—Not for three months only. No one of those looms will perhaps cost less than 20 *l.* or 30 *l.*

2391. You are aware there must be a limit to this protection?—The French give the limit according to the price you pay for it. If you apply in France for protection, you pay a certain amount for protection for 12 months, a larger sum for seven years, and a larger sum still if you have it protected for ever.

2392. Have you anything further to state?—Yes, another thing that is of very great importance would be, if the bleachers were compelled to stamp the length and width upon each piece of cloth. We find that a very great evil. That will not at all interfere with trade; but as the weights and the measures are well looked after, we do not see why the length also should not, because it is very disreputable and does much injury to the country, and those goods that are perhaps 11 ½ yards or 11 ¾ yards, get the common ticket put upon them, 12 yards. I know the bleachers will not like it, but it is a very important thing. We invariably make our goods 12 ¼, and they of course must cost a higher price; and those short lengths going out of the country tend very much to depreciate the manufacture of this country.

2393. Do you require any legislative enactment?—The bleachers will not do it without. In Ireland the linen cloth is stamped, and the bleachers are made subject to a penalty if they stamp it either as false length or they stamp it as sound when it is damaged. It would tend very much to raise the character of our manufacture.

2394. Have you anything further to state?—I put in an account of wages taken from our book indiscriminately; I also requested my overlooker to give me particular cases of country families. There are one or two of those I should beg to put in. One is the case of James Bradshaw, of Penworth, near Preston. He has three sons, 17, 19 and 21 years; he has two daughters, 18 and 24, whose average earnings for the last 21 weeks are 43 *l.*; another country weaver, Peter Forrest, of Goosnaigh, a family of 10 persons, of whom six are weavers, who average 8 *s.* each, besides taking care of three cows. Richard Rigby, Whittingham, six in family, ages from 16 to 26, five of them weavers; earnings 42 *s.* per week.

John Scott, called in; and Examined.

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2395. WHERE do you come from?—Manchester.

2396. Are you a weaver?—Yes.

2397. A hand-loom weaver?—Yes.

2398. How long have you been a hand-loom weaver?—Seventeen or 18 years.

2399. Have you been residing in Manchester all that time?—I have been 14 or nearly 15 years residing at Manchester.

2400. Where were you a weaver before?—In Dublin.

2401. What is the state of the hand-loom weavers at Manchester?—The state of hand-loom weavers is very bad indeed; the wages they get are so low that they cannot obtain the necessaries of life; they cannot even buy a sufficiency of food, much less anything else; that I know as a fact, from personal observation and experience.

2402. Are you in the plain or the fancy trade?—I am in both.

2403. You work and weave both?—Yes, occasionally.

2404. Cotton or silk?—Silk-weaving, all silk.

2405. How were you chosen to come here; who selected you?—The silk-weavers of Manchester and Salford held a meeting to elect two persons to come up to give evidence upon the state of the silk trade there; they appointed me and another. Our names were sent up to the Chairman of this Committee.

2406. Are you receiving as good wages as the average of weavers employed in that department?—Rather better.

2407. What are the wages you are receiving?—It is difficult to state a precise sum per week, for I am not employed the whole of my time at weaving, but I could give an average.

2408. For the year?—Yes, for the year.

2409. Will you give that average?—The average of my wages for the last 10 or perhaps 12 months is about 8*s.* or 8*s.* 4*d.*

2410. What expenses come against that 8*s.* or 8*s.* 4*d.*?—I have looms of my own, and therefore I have not to pay the charge that a journeyman has who works in another person's place, and consequently the 8*s.* 4*d.* is clear, with the exception of candle-light and expenses for keeping the loom in repair, shuttles, dressing, additional rent and winding.

2411. Now how much do those deductions amount to out of the 8*s.* 4*d.*; what do you think you have clear to spend on food and clothing and rent?—About 1*s.* 4*d.* would be the deductions from that 8*s.* 4*d.*

2412. Then you have 7*s.* clear for clothing, food and rent?—Yes; the 1*s.* 4*d.* is the expense coming against me, having a loom of my own, but the expense coming against a journeyman would be a clear half-crown out of the wages that he would earn; the expenses coming against me for that journeyman's loom, for winding and necessary repairs, dressing, &c., would be about 1*s.* 3*d.*

2413. Then supposing the loom not to be your own, the 8*s.* 4*d.*, which is the outside of your wages, would be reduced to at least 6*s.*?—Yes.

2414. How much from the 7*s.*, which is your own net earning, would have to be deducted for the rent of your house?—I at present pay 3*s.* 6*d.* a week rent, but the additional rent is paid from the profit that I have from a number of looms; I could never pay 3*s.* 6*d.* out of the net sum of my own wages, consequently I am enabled to pay the rent, when I do pay any, out of the profits which those looms bring me.

2415. How many looms have you?—I have six.

2416. But supposing you had not those looms, and had a house commensurate with the working of a smaller quantity of looms, what would you pay per week for that?—A house with two rooms, one to hold one loom and a bed, and the other to live in, would be 2*s.* 6*d.* a week at least.

2417. Then 2*s.* 6*d.* would have to be deducted from the 8*s.* 4*d.*, leaving 5*s.* 8*d.* for food and clothing and fuel?—Yes.

2418. How much would your fuel cost you per week?—Fuel is cheap in the quarter where I live; about 10*d.* for fuel.

2419. Ten-pence a week?—Yes.

2420. But is not that included in the 2*s.* 6*d.* you mentioned?—No, it is not.

2421. Then that would reduce your wages to 4*s.* 10*d.*?—Yes; but I would beg the Committee to observe, I do not mean that I have only that to live upon.

2422. No, no; it would reduce the net amount of your wages, which would go

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to the purchase of clothing and food, to 4*s.* 10*d.* a week?—Yes; the net amount of my own earnings.

2423. Now, what family have you?—I have a wife, and three children under seven years of age.

2424. And what is the net amount of their earnings?—The children earn nothing.

2425. What is the clear amount that your wife earns?—My wife winds for four looms, and they, when constantly going, will bring 1*s.* a loom.

2426. Then that raises again the sum on which you have to live from 4*s.* 10*d.* to 8*s.* 10*d.*?—Yes, it does.

2427. And is that 8*s.* 10*d.* clear sufficient to enable you to enjoy the necessaries of life?—It is not.

2428. Now, with the addition of all the looms that you have, are you, even taking you as you are, a possessor of a certain capital in looms, are you with that addition enabled to enjoy the necessaries of life?—No, I am not; I do not get a sufficiency of the commonest of the necessaries of life.

2429. I suppose you are sent here as a person respectable on account of your prudence and industry and your general knowledge?—It has been represented so.

2430. You would not have been sent here if your character was not good among your neighbours?—Certainly not.

2431. If you are not able to obtain the necessaries of life, who have all these advantages, are there many others in the same line of business as yourself who are worse off than you are?—I would beg to observe that the profit from the looms add more to my earnings than the winding for the looms, which makes me better off than most of my neighbours.

2432. Now, have the wages of weavers been often reduced during your experience for the same sort of work?—Yes. I have a list of prices here, which will show the difference of wages for several years back. This is a comparative difference between the prices paid for the main articles of manufacture in the silk trade, between the year 1824 and 1826: four doubles, gros de Naples, paid in 1824, 11*d.*, in 1826, 6*d.*; three doubles, 11*d.* in 1824, in 1826, 5½*d.*; three singles in 1824, 10*d.*, in 1826, 5*d.*; two singles in 1824, 7*d.*, in 1826, 4*d.*; 31-inch black fringed handkerchiefs in 1824, paid 7*s.* 6*d.* a dozen; in 1826, 6*s.* and 4*s.* now; 35-inch, in 1824, were 9*s.* 6*d.*; in 1826, 7*s.*; and now they are 5*s.* 3*d.*

2433. Are those prices Manchester prices?—Yes.

2434. Were all these articles made in Manchester in 1824?—Yes, all.

2435. Are those the prices you have received yourself?—The prices I have received myself: 32-inch romol handkerchiefs, 8*s.* 6*d.*, in 1824; there were very few of them made in 1826, and therefore I cannot state the price, but now they are paying 4*s.*; 35-inch in 1824, 10*s.*, and now they are paying 4*s.* 9*d.*

2436. Then the reduction in wages has been very great since 1824?—Very great indeed.

2437. And consequently the weavers are in a state of great distress?—Undoubtedly.

2438. Will you inform the Committee what in your opinion is the real cause of that distress?—I conceive that the reductions that have been made in the prices are unnecessary; the cause of the distress is that we cannot get sufficient wages for the work we perform.

2439. And you think the reductions in wages have been unnecessary?—I think a great deal of the amount that has been deducted from the wages was altogether unnecessary.

2440. Will you state why you think they have been unnecessary?—Yes. In 1826 the wages were dropped to such a very low rate that the weavers became very much alarmed for their condition; they met together and formed an association to protect their wages; deputations were sent to the various manufacturers in the trade, tendering them a list of prices, which, on some articles, had a small advance, and an equalization on others; this is the list of prices; the manufacturers, without exception, I believe, all agreed to it; they said it was reasonable; a number were printed and pasted up in all the warehouses, as the prices paid by the manufacturers; and those works that were not embodied in this list were to be arranged according to the agreement of the masters and workmen. I beg leave to give it in.

2441. Why do you think it was unnecessary for the masters to have reduced the

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wages from that regulation?—From the manner in which they acted. This voluntary agreement between the manufacturers and weavers was broken by the masters unitedly. Towards the latter end of 1827 they joined in a body, and, I believe, entered into a bond to break through the regulation. The weavers being in an association, and having subscribed a sum of money, withstood the reduction which they offered. I believe it was not so much the reduction of the wages that they wanted to effect as the breaking up of our association. We struck. There were some thousands of weavers out for about 10 or 11 weeks, and ultimately we gained our point; and many of the manufacturers said, that if we did not look for any more than the prices of that list, they could afford to give it; and one manufacturer said to me, "If you do not raise the price of the sarsnets, the three threads, (which was the main article of manufacture) above 7*d.*, (which was a halfpenny more than we required in the list,) we can afford to give it to you."

2442. Was there no circumstance connected with the demand for the fabrics which you wove which caused the masters to be necessitated to reduce the wages?—I do not see that there was any necessity in reducing the wages, because the manufacturers all jointly combined, for it appeared it was not their immediate object to reduce the wages, so much as to destroy our association.

2443. Was there no law passed which destroyed your power to combine about that time?—The Combination Laws were repealed in 1824, and this was in 1826.

2444. This list appears to have been printed in 1827?—That was printed in 1827; but a written list was tendered to the manufacturers previous, just the same as that.

2445. You are a broad-silk weaver?—Yes.

2446. How many broad-silk weavers are employed in Manchester and its neighbourhood?—I should think about 10,000, or 12,000.

2447. Has not the silk trade greatly increased in Lancashire since 1824?—No, I do not think it has greatly increased since 1824; from 1818 up to 1824, the trade rapidly increased.

2448. What was the cause of the increase in the trade in Lancashire at that period?—I can assign no reason but the extraordinary demand there was of British silks.

2449. Did not the silk trade at Manchester supersede the silk trade of Spitalfields and Macclesfield?—I conceive not; because the prices of the Manchester manufacturers were not so very much below those of Spitalfields previous to 1826.

2450. Are you aware of any other place working up silk which is in a better state than Manchester at the present time?—I cannot answer that question positively; I think that the silk trade generally throughout the country is very much depressed.

2451. Is it not generally understood that if there be any prosperity in the silk trade at all, that prosperity exists in Manchester rather than any other place?—If manufacturing a quantity of goods be termed prosperity, why Manchester does manufacture a quantity of goods.

2452. But is there any place where the silk trade has been established later than at Manchester, or has increased later than at Manchester?—The manufacture of silk or the weaving only?

2453. Has silk weaving been established at any other place in preference to Manchester of late years?—Yes; in the neighbourhood of West Leigh, 12 or 14 miles from Manchester; but it has not been sent there in preference to any of the other districts in point of skill and workmanship; it was the means the manufacturers took to reduce the rest of the weavers who were joined in union.

2454. Are they doing better at West Leigh than at Manchester?—They are not, for they receive less wages.

2455. Do you recollect when foreign wrought silks were introduced into this country?—In 1826.

2456. What effect had they on the state of the silk trade?—It would appear that the foreign wrought silk had the effect of reducing the wages very much.

2457. Do the weavers complain of that as a cause of the reduction of their wages?—No doubt that is one great cause.

2458. But the increase of throwing mills in Lancashire is a proof that the trade has rapidly advanced since the year 1826?—I do not think it is a proof that the trade has rapidly advanced; it only proves the Manchester manufacturers commenced throwing their own silk, because there are many advantages in it.

2459. Are you of opinion the silk trade has been retarded in its progress since

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since that period?—I think it has in point of skill and ingenuity on the part of the weavers, by being deprived of a great portion of their wages, and consequently of the ability to improve themselves in arts of the trade. I myself would have embarked in the figure weaving some years back, only I found that the prices were fast reducing, and that I could not provide the necessary means to get into the trade; there is a vast expense attending the weavers going into the figure branch.

2460. Then you think the necessitous state of the weavers has deprived them from entering so much into any invention or any improvement in the trade, as they otherwise would?—Undoubtedly; my own master offered me a Jacquard two or three months back, and I would not attempt the undertaking, because it would have cost me about 5 *l.* to have set it going.

2461. And you could not afford to pay the 5 *l.*?—I had not five pence to pay for it with; but the custom in Manchester is, for the manufacturer to advance the money and stop it so much a piece, according to the way the agreement is made. The reason that I did not embark in the figure trade will appear obvious, when we contrast the price paying for the figure works four or five years ago with the price paying for them now. In 1830, a 27-100 reed, 400 machine, was paid 1 *s.* per yard; in 1835, it was 6 ½ *d.*; 27-100 waistcoat, double cover, 400 machine, paid in 1832, 1 *s.* 9 *d.*; in 1835 they are paying 1 *s.* 2 *d.*, and some at 1 *s.* For 27-100 single-covered waistcoat, 400 machine, in 1831, 1 *s.* 3 *d.*; in 1832, 1 *s.* 2 *d.*; in 1835, 9 *d.*; 24-100 palmoreens (a mixture of silk and cotton) 400 machine, in 1830, 1 *s.*; in 1835, 5 *d.*; lustres (also a mixture of silk and cotton; there were none of these making previous to 1833 on the Jacquards) in 1833, 8 *d.*; 1835, 5 *d.* So that seeing the prices so rapidly declining, coming so near to the prices of the plains, I was altogether deterred from having anything at all to do with them.

2462. And notwithstanding the improvement in machinery, the invention of the Jacquard, which greatly facilitated the art of figure weaving, you are unable to take advantage of that?—I certainly am.

2463. Do you consider, that with the late improvements of Jacquard machinery, it is more difficult to weave a figured piece than a plain one?—I conceive that the art lies in understanding the machine; I believe there is no more difficulty in weaving the material by the machine than weaving it plain without the machine; all the art that is to be learnt is understanding its nature and movement. They cannot make a greater length, but as to the difficulty of the thing, I do not think any exists.

2464. Then you get somewhat higher wages for working figured works than plain, in England, do you not?—Certainly.

2465. You have carried back the wages now paid for the Jacquard works to 1830?—On some kinds of work.

2466. Can you carry them back further; can you carry back the price paid for the Jacquard works for a longer period than five years?—I could not at present; but if those works were making previous, they would be considerably higher than they were paid in 1830.

2467. When was the Jacquard loom introduced?—The Jacquard loom came into operation about 1821; the patent came out about then; it was Mr. Wilson, of London, that introduced it into the country, and he got the patent for it.

2468. When was it introduced into Manchester?—I believe it was in Manchester almost as soon as in London.

2469. What are the weekly earnings of those employed on the Jacquards?—They can weave 84 yards of cloth in little better than three weeks.

2470. And what is the price of 84 yards?—At 6 ½ *d.* a yard, will be about 12 *s.* or 14 *s.* a week; but a journeyman working at that loom will have to pay 3 *d.* out of the 1 *s.* to the owner of the loom.

2471. Then what will be his net wages?—When a fourth is deducted there will remain 10 *s.* or 11 *s.* when he is at work; but there is one great disadvantage connected with figure-weaving, they are incessantly changing the patterns, which takes a deal of time from the weaver; whoever works the loom will have to change the pattern by lacing the cards and attaching them to the machine, which at least will take two days, and this is not taking into account the chance of waiting for warps, which sometimes may be a week or more.

2472. For those two days does he receive wages?—Nothing at all.

2473. Does not the master in England pay for mounting the Jacquard?—All that

that the manufacturer of Manchester finds in the figure-loom is the machine that goes over head.

2474. And the cards?—Yes; they are an integral part of the machine; the harness and mails, and the putting of the piece to work, that is, the putting it through the harness, all fall on the weaver, which I conceive is a very great advantage to the Manchester manufacturers, because the London manufacturers I believe do not possess that advantage; they pay for all.

2475. Now are the weavers, either the Jacquard or plain weavers, fully employed?—They are not at present.

2476. How many months in a year, on an average, are they without work?—I cannot exactly answer the question, not being in that branch myself, but I know they wait frequently. I was at a warehouse last week when a figure-weaver brought in his piece; he asked when there would be another warp and was told there would be no more of that sort, but if he would come, I think it was the day after, he should have one of a different description.

2477. Is there a great difference between the price of the Jacquard and the plain fabric?—The difference is about 2*d.* a yard.

2478. You have stated that the first general reduction was made in 1826; that the weavers made an effort to resist that reduction; and that the manufacturers did not abide by the agreement they entered into with their weavers for any length of time?—Yes.

2479. What means do the manufacturers take to effect a reduction; do individuals do it first, or do the masters generally reduce at once?—With the exception of that general combination of the masters against the workmen, if I may use the expression, they generally do reduce individually or a few individuals together.

2480. You stated that unnecessary reductions in wages are the principal cause of your distress?—Though the reductions I have stated are unnecessary, and which I believe to be so, yet they are not the only reductions that take place in a weaver's wages. What I am going to state is casual, it does not happen to every one, yet it is very general; that is, abatements which take place for either real or supposed faults in the work; and I have received instructions to state to the Committee the grievance. To prove that that practice has become very pernicious, not only to every workman concerned, but also to the honest manufacturer, I will hand in a ticket that belongs to a certain manufacturer in Manchester, of the name of George Smith, which will show the extent to which such a practice may be carried if not put a stop to by some means or other. This ticket has been had from the warehouse; it is a description of work that the manufacturer wanted. It appears that he had not commenced manufacturing time enough to execute his order, and he put this provision in the ticket in order to get the work made in his own time. "If wove in three weeks, to be paid 7 ½*d.* per yard; if kept out four, to be paid 3 ¾*d.*"

2481. Did the weavers agree to that?—I believe the weavers never expected it would be put into execution, but they found that the master was as good as his word on the ticket, for he has actually carried it into practice.

2482. Then disputes arise between the weavers and the masters occasionally?—Yes; when the weavers consider that the abatement is too large, or when they consider the work has no right to be abated at all.

2483. Have you not arbitration laws, to which to refer in such cases of dispute?—Yes; but under the circumstances in which the weaver may be placed, he sometimes thinks it better for him to submit to the abatement than to push the difference to an arbitration, for he almost invariably loses his work if he goes to that extent, and more so if the weaver should not have any prospect of procuring work elsewhere; he considers that it is more to his advantage to submit to the abatement and continue his employment in that warehouse, than that his family should want.

2484. In fact his employer takes a sort of revenge upon him and turns him off?—It is the fact.

2485. Now have you ever been called before a Committee of this House before?—Yes, in 1832.

2486. Do you know of any instance where witnesses have been turned off in consequence of giving evidence before this House?—I do not.

2487. How many hours in the day do the silk-weavers work?—From 15 to 17 hours a day.

2488. Upon the average?—Yes, upon the average.

2489. Exclusive of meal hours?—No, including meal hours.

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2490. What time do you allow for meals; an hour?—A weaver never thinks of taking an hour to his dinner.

2491. Do you think he takes an hour altogether?—I very often eat my dinner in a quarter of an hour, and sometimes less.

2492. Do all the meals take an hour?—No, they do not.

2493. What time do you rise in the morning generally?—Generally at six o'clock.

2494. Then your weaving takes you till when?—Takes me till nine.

2495. What time do you go to bed?—I generally go to bed about 11; I generally work till 11 myself.

2496. Then in fact you have no leisure time at all?—Not the least; but I should state, that whenever I can leave off work at 10, or half-past 10, I sit up perhaps till half-past 11, improving myself in one thing or other.

2497. Then you have every disposition to improve yourself, but the necessity for your working so much to obtain a limited amount of wages prevents you?—I have such a desire to improve myself, that at one time I thought I would let the house go to wreck altogether, and apply myself to study, but necessity produced a re-action on my mind.

2498. Did you ever employ yourself in endeavouring to make patterns for figured goods?—I have.

2499. Would it not be of great importance that your children and yourself should have some means of instruction in the elements of art?—I think it would be highly beneficial, not only to the children, but to the trade at large.

2500. Do you know whether any power-looms are employed in the manufacture of silk; or are they capable of being applied to it with any advantage to the manufacturer?—An attempt has been made by a manufacturer in Manchester to weave what we call Bandannas; that is, those that are printed, and worn in the pocket.

2501. And has the experiment succeeded?—I believe that he has regretted his attempt.

2502. Then your opinion is, that the power-loom has not yet come into successful competition with the hand-loom manufacture of silk?—Not at all.

2503. The bandannas are made of the coarsest sort of silk, and are the very coarsest article of silk manufacture, are they not?—They are.

2504. Then you do not attribute any part of the distress to the power-loom?—Not directly to the power-loom as working on the silk, but indirectly; the power-loom in the cotton trade has injured us.

2505. By creating a greater demand for the cheaper production in cotton produced by the power-loom, it indirectly re-acts on the silk trade?—Yes, and by causing a great influx of hands into the trade.

2506. What plan do the weavers wish to propose to better their present condition?—They have petitioned for boards of trade. There are various opinions as to which of the plans would be the most efficient.

2507. Did the meeting which appointed you to come up here express any opinion as to boards of trade, or instruct you to express any opinion on the subject of boards of trade?—Yes.

2508. What is their opinion upon them?—They think that one general board to regulate the price throughout the kingdom would be most beneficial to them; they do not square their opinions according to the probability of obtaining their wishes, they look to what would be most essential.

2509. They prefer that to local boards of trade?—They would prefer a uniformity of price throughout the whole kingdom to the local boards; yet they have no objection to take the local boards, or even Mr. Fielden's plan, provided that no better provision could be made.

2510. Then their first wish is, for a general board of trade; their second, for a local board of trade; and their third wish would be, for Mr. Fielden's plan?—They have no decided objection to any one of the plans, but their preference is given to the general board. In 1818 (I am now speaking with regard to the silk weavers, not the hand-loom weavers generally) there was an inquiry as to the practicability of extending the Spitalfields Act throughout the whole country where silk weaving was carried on; the weavers generally concurred in the proposed plan; they sent up a person to represent their wish before that Committee; and it appears that they have not altered their sentiments upon that question yet.

2511. Do they still wish for a general board of trade upon the principle of the Spitalfields Act?—Not upon the exact principle of that Act.

2512. Will you state how they would wish to differ from that Act?—That the prices of weaving should vary according to the state of the market; they do not wish Parliament to regulate the wages for them, as it is the opinion of some that the Spitalfields Act did, which in fact was not the case. They wish masters and men to be allowed to regulate them conjointly, and that to be made binding by an Act of Parliament.

2513. That from time to time the masters and the weavers should agree in a certain rate of wages, which should be in operation for a limited time, and that afterwards that regulation should be binding by Act of Parliament?—By Act of Parliament binding upon all making the various description of goods throughout the empire.

2514. And at the end of the term for which that regulation was to be binding, they would be willing to enter into another regulation according to the state of the market?—Yes.

2515. And that that should be binding again for another period?—Yes.

2516. Are you well acquainted with Mr. Fielden's plan?—I think I understand it pretty well.

2517. Will you give to the Committee what you conceive to be an outline of the plan?—Yes; I conceive his plan to be, not to regulate wages throughout the country uniformly, but only uniformly in districts; and that from all the manufacturers in each district making the same kind of cloth, should be selected the fewest making half of that cloth, and that the average should be struck from the wages they were paying.

2518. No, from a majority of those?—Then I do not understand the plan correctly. I thought that the fewest number of manufacturers making half the goods would be taken, and the prices of those manufacturers averaged, and that should be the lowest minimum for the next three months.

2519. And in that you are mistaken; the proposition is, that the average should be taken from the fewest number making half the goods, and that out of that number a majority should be selected paying the highest wages, and the average of that majority should be the minimum: now, with that understanding, would that alter your sentiments with regard to Mr. Fielden's Bill?—Yes, it does. I believe Mr. Fielden's plan would be far preferable to the present state of things.

2520. Mr. Fielden's plan being confined to districts, is not that an advantage over a general board of trade, which might affect some places to the detriment of others?—I cannot see why one place could not afford the same amount of wages as another.

2521. Now, in the cotton trade, there is a certain branch of it existing in the north of Ireland, which, if there was a general rate of wages, a compulsory rate of wages, would prevent the existence of that branch of trade remaining in Ireland, provided the same wages were paid as are paid in Glasgow and in Manchester; would not that operate against the Irish weaver?—And is not that description of goods made in Ireland operating against the English manufacturers, to bring them down lower than what they are?

2522. Do you see any difficulty in returns of the wages paid by the manufacturers being obtained by inquiry of them and of their weavers, according to Mr. Fielden's plan?—I think that an accurate statement could not be obtained, from the indisposition which the manufacturers would have to expose the state of their trade.

2523. But the wages?—There would be no objection to the rate of wages; and if they would not make a return, it could be had from the weavers.

2524. Could the probable quantity of goods of each sort made by every manufacturer be obtained in like manner?—With not so much ease as the wages; it might be obtained, but not to a certainty; the probable quantity might.

2525. Is it a matter of complaint among the weavers, that there is a difference among the wages now paying by the manufacturers of Manchester for the same sort of work?—There is not such a difference existing at present in the prices of Manchester as there formerly was, but the reason of that is owing to their coming so very low.

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2526. Is there any difference?—In some things there is a difference, and more so in the figured branch than in the plain. The manufacturers have taken effectual means to make the wages equal by introducing the weaving into the neighbourhood of West Leigh; they kept continually reducing from the 6½*d.*, that was paying for the main article according to the printed list, until they got it down to 4*d.* in Manchester; and I believe at West Leigh the weavers have but 3½*d.*

2527. Do you think the tendency either of a general board or a local board of trade, or of Mr. Fielden's plan, would be to produce a gradual improvement in wages?—Yes, I do.

2528. Will you explain how you think that effect will be produced?—Because the manufacturers would not be afraid of their neighbours underselling them as it regards the amount of wages paid on the article manufactured.

2529. You have stated just now that there is no great difference in the wages paid by those manufacturers?—But there may be. There is a warehouse at present wanting to reduce a certain description of work one halfpenny below what others are paying; so that that will eventually bring the rest down to this price.

2530. Could they be brought down if there was an abundance of work in the market?—I have seen reductions effected when work was plentiful.

2531. Now, if an Act were founded on the plan proposed by Mr. Fielden, could such an Act be easily evaded?—All institutions are, in a limited extent, evaded in some shape or other; but I do not see why that should militate against the passing of the Act, because, upon that ground, we might say that a law to prevent all people from robbing, because some few steal, would be useless.

2532. But supposing a case, that it should be for the interest of the master and the weaver; in a case of robbery it is always the interest of one party not to be robbed, though it is the interest of the other to rob him; but suppose a case where it was the interest of the master to give a lower rate of wages, and for the weaver to conceal the fact that he was receiving a lower rate of wages, how then would the Act reach them, where both parties were interested in evading the Act?—It is possible that might be the case; but it would only be to a very limited extent, and we might as well argue that tolls are of no use in preserving the roads, because some compound for the toll contrary to law.

2533. Supposing a penalty were inflicted on both parties in the event of a discovery, do you think then it could be evaded to any extent?—I think a penalty would have the effect of lessening the chance of evasion.

2534. Have not the manufacturers more power to depress than the workmen have to raise the wages?—According to the present state of things the manufacturers have a decided advantage over the weavers; it is the interest of all the manufacturers to reduce to the lowest rate of wages, and the weavers going individually to obtain work, are through their poverty compelled to take it at the master's price. The town weaver is told that if he will not take it, plenty in the country will; and the country weaver is told that there are plenty in the town who will be glad of it; and thus we are made the instruments in reducing our own wages.

2535. If you had an average rate of wages, and a demand for labour, would not the master manufacturers prevent the workmen having the benefit of a rise?—If the manufacturer had a demand for his work, and could not get it done without, it would be his interest to advance the wages beyond the average price.

2536. Then it would not be operative to prevent a rise; if you were to fix the price it would not prevent a rise?—I have not stated that the price should be fixed. What I stated was, that it should be fixed from time to time, according as the state of things will require; according to the state of the market.

2537. Then is it your view that it should be very frequently fixed, from week to week, or from fortnight to fortnight, or how?—I cannot conceive that a change of wages in such a short time would be requisite; that is, a reduction.

2538. Then what is the limit you would assign?—Perhaps three or six months, according as the manufacturers and weavers could agree.

2539. But in six months might there not be a very great deal of distress, if the manufacturers could not pay the rate of wages that should be fixed upon?—I think a provision might be made to allow the manufacturers and weavers to meet again before the time expired, and to regulate the wages according to their present state of things.

2540. Then

2540. Then your wish would be, that they should be permanently regulated every six months, and you would make a provision for more frequent interference? —Yes.

2541. How would you provide for that? How would you arrange, for instance, in sudden contingencies, such as always occur in trade? How would you arrange for the regulation of the wages under such circumstances? How would you enable a weaver to benefit himself by an advance, or to secure himself against a decline, when there was not work between the six months?—The weavers and the manufacturers could be called together by ordinary means, in the same way as any other meeting is called together, stating the object of such a meeting, which could be discussed, and the possibility of an advance, or the necessity of a reduction determined; for my part, I cannot see any objection to such a plan.

2542. A certain number of weavers, or a certain number of manufacturers, might be empowered to call a meeting to meet such an emergency. One of the provisions of the Act might be that?—Persons should be appointed by the bodies of each party, the body of the masters, and the body of the men; they might have a standing committee for a given space of time, and both parties be called together.

2543. Would not that operate to provide for perpetual fluctuations?—I conceive that it would be considerably better than the present state of things.

2544. Supposing a rapid change were to take place, and the parties were to desire that the state of the market might be accommodated to their condition and to their wants, would you have men permanently elected by the weavers and by the masters to watch the fluctuation of the market, or how?—I would not have them permanently elected for any given time; the weavers should elect a person whom they thought fit, and the manufacturers the same.

2545. Your object is, for this period, to obtain a minimum and a uniformity of wages?—Yes.

2546. If there happened to be any increased demand for work, of course the masters would be obliged to give the weavers the benefit of that increased demand, because the weavers would not work unless they had the larger wages?—A difference might ensue as to the necessity of an advance or not; but that should in all cases be regulated by the person appointed to transact that business for the time.

2547. You have expressed a wish that your body should be a general board? —Yes.

2548. But if in Manchester, or any other place, you establish a body that is to decide between the six or the three months, on the rate of wages that is to be paid, that of course becomes a local board, and could not influence the general board of trade which you suggest?—I would have it according to the general board. I would have the rate of wages to extend wherever that description of work was made. I know there is a difficulty involved there, because in some parts of the country an advance might be made, and in others a reduction required.

2549. The question was asked you merely to show that a general board of trade would hardly be complete of itself; they must require also the addition of a sort of local board of trade, to meet the contingencies which might happen in the interval between the beginning and the end of the three or six months for which the regulation was to be binding; do you think it would require some sort of committee or local board?—I think it would require some sort of board to meet those contingencies which might arise in various parts.

2550. Do you represent now the opinions of the silk weavers alone, or of the general hand-loom weavers of Manchester, when you state that you are not for a fixed minimum of wages, but merely for a minimum changing from time to time, according to the altered circumstances of the demand in the market?—I speak only for the silk weavers; and they are of opinion that a general board would be more beneficial than local boards.

2551. But is it not a fact that silk weaving is confined to a fewer number of places than cotton weaving and other branches of the trade?—Yes, certainly.

2552. Then one general board of trade would be much more likely to suit their case than suit the case of a branch of the trade carried on in a greater number of places?—One of the reasons why the silk weavers of Manchester wish a general

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board in preference to local ones is, that Macclesfield is paying something above Manchester; now if the Macclesfield manufacturers should reduce to Manchester prices, and they have made several attempts, we are very well aware that the Manchester manufacturers, having the power to reduce us again, will do so, and thus we may go down still lower and lower.

2553. Was the meeting at which you were selected as a witness attended by a preponderance of silk weavers?—All silk weavers; and I am very sorry that the cotton weavers have not had an opportunity of being heard, for there are some points which the last witness, Mr. Gardner, touched upon that I conceive might be corrected. I do not say that he wilfully mis-stated them, but they proceed rather from his want of knowledge, such as the amount of wages that the cotton weavers receive, and the time that they are weaving. I believe that 60 hours a week is considerably below the time the cotton weavers are obliged to weave; for I cannot conceive it possible that a man having a wife and three children would be content to work only 10 hours out of the day, and get only 4*s.* 7½*d.* to support his family with.

2554. Have you any reason to suppose that the silk weavers work longer hours than the cotton weavers in Manchester?—I think the time is pretty equal.

2555. You have stated the silk weavers work 96 hours a week?—Yes, that is about the average.

2556. Including meals?—Yes, including meals.

2557. You stated that one of the objects which the silk weavers wish to accomplish is an average rate of wages throughout the silk districts; and you mentioned there are three rates at present paid, to your knowledge; is there not a considerable difference in the expense of living at Manchester, or Leigh or Macclesfield?—I am not aware that I mentioned three different rates.

2558. You said they paid more at Macclesfield than at Manchester, and less at Leigh than at Manchester?—But those that work at Leigh work for the Manchester manufacturers.

2559. Then is it not the fact, that a weaver is as well off at Leigh if he gets something less, than at Manchester if he gets something more, on account of the difference of expense; is not that one of the causes that enables him to work at a lower rate?—When I mentioned the difference of price between Leigh and Manchester, I did not state it as a difference in the amount of wages; the manufacturers pay that much less for their trouble and expense of bringing the work to them from Manchester: had the weavers of Leigh to come to Manchester for the work, they would receive the same price as the weavers of Manchester do.

2560. But they live for something less at Leigh, do not they?—I do not know how they live there.

2561. Do you think the powers given by Mr. Fielden's plan for settling disputes by arbitration would be sufficient?—I do, if his Bill were made law.

2562. You have stated that you had an association in 1826, which was subsequently broken up; has an association among the weavers existed since that time to keep up wages?—There have been several attempts made to form an association among the weavers, but they have all failed.

2563. What is the reason why they failed, when trades' unions sprung up so numerously among persons engaged in factories?—The time and trouble and expense which our former union cost us disheartened the weavers so that they would not join any union; they believe their condition to be hopeless, unless some legislative enactment takes place to authorize a regulation of wages.

2564. Was the object of those trades' unions to sustain the rate of wages, and prevent their fall?—I believe that was their object, to sustain the wages and prevent their fall.

2565. Do you think the wages of the parties engaged in factories would have been reduced more upon a par with hand-looms, provided those trades' unions had not sprung up?—I believe that unions do not exist so much among the factories as they do among the mechanics of various descriptions.

Sabbati, 11° *die Aprilis*, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

John Scott, called in; and further Examined.

2566. DO you think there is a greater power to form trades' unions and combinations among persons engaged in factories than there is among persons engaged in hand-loom weaving, who live separate in their own houses?—Those working in factories and confined places have a greater opportunity of combining for the protection of their wages than the weavers who are scattered through very wide districts.

2567. Do you think that is one of the reasons why the wages in factories have been sustained, when the hand-loom weavers have received such a great fall?—I do consider it one great reason.

2568. Do you think that when the weavers are in a state of distress it leads them to be dissatisfied with the existing institutions or with the form of government under which they live?—I think it has that tendency.

2569. Was there in 1830 and 1831 a great disposition to have reform in Parliament?—A very great disposition indeed. I myself changed my opinions upon political matters at that time, and I know scores who changed theirs at the same time.

2570. Do you think that that feeling was produced in consequence of the distressed state of the working classes?—It generally proceeds from that; but I do not think it was my own circumstances that changed my opinion upon political matters; it was reflection more than the state of my circumstances.

2571. Was one of the main expectations of the working classes, in reference to the Reform Bill, that it would change their condition for the better?—I do not think they expected any immediate benefit from the Reform Bill. They thought it would be the means of their voice being heard in Parliament more so than it had before the Reform Bill; but when the true principle of the measure was discovered a great number of the working classes disapproved of the Bill, because the suffrage was not extended to the working classes generally, but only those who pay high rents, and consequently are in a great measure independent of labour.

2572. Are the working classes better satisfied with the institutions of the country since the change has taken place?—I do not think they are. They viewed the Reform Bill as a measure calculated to join the middle and upper classes to Government, and leave them in the hands of Government as a sort of machine to work according to the pleasure of Government.

2573. Do you think their feelings are not more directly represented than they used to be, in consequence of the connexion between the working classes and the persons that employ them?—In a certain degree they are.

2574. Do you think it is one cause of their being dissatisfied since the passing of the Reform Bill, that their condition has not improved?—I do not think they expected an immediate improvement in their condition from the passing of the Reform Bill.

2575. You have stated as one main cause of the distress of the hand-loom weavers a reduction of wages, which you considered had been carried to an unnecessary extent; is not it an opinion among the weavers that the corn laws operate very injuriously against them?—It is not their opinion generally. I question, if the corn laws were repealed, whether food would continue low for any length of time, and my reason for so saying is this, that if foreign corn comes in in abundance you will very soon destroy the capability of the farmer to compete with the foreigner, which would in time throw the land out of cultivation; and when the foreigner perceived that, he would raise the price of his grain in our market, which would destroy the profit of the manufacturer who exchanged his goods for that article; and just in the same way would foreign thrown silk admitted free into our market destroy the throwing of silk here, which, when the foreign thrower would perceive, he would raise the price of his thrown silk in our market, which would eventually disable our manufacturers from competing with them upon any terms whatever; and thus our whole trade, both weaving and throwing, would be given away.

 2576. You

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2576. You conceive the British farmer and the British weaver to be sailing in the same boat together?—Yes.

2577. Do you observe, in consequence of distress, that they attend less punctually at church on a Sunday?—It undoubtedly is the case.

2578. For what reason?—They are ashamed to go to church; they have not sufficient clothing.

2579. Is the furniture in their houses as much as they require?—Not at all; it is all going to decay, and there is no means of renewing it.

2580. Is there any great increase in dram-drinking or intoxication?—Not among the weavers, for they do not get wages to buy a sufficiency of the commonest food. There may be a few who substitute drink instead of meat, but that cannot last long; they destroy their constitution and die away.

2581. Do you think it is a common circumstance for a man driven by distress to desert his family, and to go as a last resort for temporary comfort to the dram-shop?—It undoubtedly has that effect among those who are not possessed of sufficient determination to bear up against the calamities brought upon them by low wages.

2582. Do you think it would have the effect of driving them to the dram-shop?—That certainly is the case in some instances.

2583. Has not the large investment of capital in machinery for spinning and weaving in factories had a tendency to keep wages more regular in those manufactures?—It is a question that I have not thought much about. I should think it is the interest of those who invest their capital to give as low wages as they possibly can, in order that that capital might turn to more profit.

2584. If a person has a large capital, and can afford under an absence of profit to keep on his hands, in the hopes of profit arising at a future time, which power is not possessed by a small capitalist, will not that have the effect of more regularly employing the weavers?—I do not think a large capitalist is inclined to keep up wages when his capital does not turn to profit, for I have seen rapid reductions made by large mill-owners in the wages of children and grown-up persons, for the last 10 years.

2585. Is it your opinion that the reductions in wages begin generally with the smaller or the larger capitalists?—I cannot speak as to the cotton trade; but I can give an answer with regard to the silk. I think it is more frequent that the large capitalist reduces; they all follow fast enough in the train.

2586. You are aware that that is not a general opinion; will you give your reason for it?—I know as a fact that the largest silk warehouses in Manchester were the first to reduce our wages.

2587. You stated that the weavers were of opinion that they shall get no relief from an alteration of the corn laws: are they aware of the fact that the price of corn in every other country is much lower than here?—They are.

2588. Are they aware of the fact that that is the cause why the weaver in foreign countries can live much better on lower wages?—They are.

2589. Are they aware that because he can live on lower wages, he is enabled to meet the produce of English weavers in foreign markets with advantage, and in some markets to drive them out of it?—Yes.

2590. And are they aware, that if the surplus corn of foreign countries were taken by this country, the price of corn would rise in those foreign countries which produce it, so that the price of wages must also rise in those countries?—I do not know that they are generally aware of that; but I should think it would be the case.

2591. You said that the weavers imagine that the importation of thrown silk from France damages them; do you think they are aware that no thrown silk is imported from France?—They are aware that thrown silk is imported from the Continent.

2592. Are they aware that thrown silk has been exported from England lately?—Yes, they are: some of our India silks have been exported into France, to answer some peculiar fabrics which they want to make.

2593. Do you know that the throwing-mills of Manchester have been so improved, that so far from apprehending an influx of foreign thrown silk, which pays a duty of 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a pound, they are now able to export thrown silk to the Continent?—It is altogether denied by the throwsters of Manchester that the machinery

machinery has so much improved, that they can compete with the foreigners in their own market.

2594. Do the weavers know the fact that English thrown silk is now exported to foreign countries?—I have heard it stated that our China and Bengal silks are sent in small quantities abroad.

2595. Are you aware of the fact that a considerable quantity of floss silk, that is, of silk twist, has been exported from England, in consequence of the superiority of English production?—By the floss I apprehend is meant the waste of the silk, carded and spun, and made into cops, and sent abroad in the same way as we send out cotton twist; but that arises not from the capability of throwing the silk, but from our spinning machinery being so much superior to the foreign: that we are enabled to spin the cops with more facility than the foreigners cannot be denied; and this kind of material is spun upon the cotton machinery.

2596. Are the weavers aware that in the silk manufacture, so great has been the improvement, that we now export both twisted silk, thrown silk and silk manufacture, to countries from whence we formerly imported all those three articles?—But that spun silk is impregnated with a vast quantity of cotton.

2597. Are those facts generally known by the weavers?—I suppose they are.

2598. Do you know as a fact, that that spun silk is impregnated with cotton?—I know it as a fact: those that manufacture spun silk purchase the pieces and ends of cotton cops that cannot be wove off without waste; they card this cotton up with the silk waste, and spin it in one thread by the cotton machinery.

2599. You have been asked if you are aware that corn is much lower in price in foreign countries than it is here; do you think that the weaver has been better off in this country since there has been a great reduction in the price of corn?—It cannot be denied that corn is cheaper now than what it has been known to be for some years; but the small difference which that makes in the price of bread so little affects the whole of his week's wages, it is hardly felt. If every other article were reduced in the same proportion as bread, then the weaver might feel it; but 2 *d.* or 4 *d.* in the week is but a small advantage to the weaver.

2600. Do you think that if the farmers and farm labourers had a better price for their corn, and were so enabled to consume more fabrics woven by the weavers, a small additional price of corn would affect the weaver?—I think not, provided our home consumption were increased to any great degree; because it would only affect his bread, and not the other articles of consumption.

2601. Where wages are so low in Ireland, or in Poland, or in other countries which export corn, do you think that the working classes of those countries are any better off in consequence of the lowness of the price of corn?—I am unacquainted with the nature of their condition, and therefore I cannot speak to it.

2602. Do you think that one reason of corn being low in those countries may not arise from the working classes being so depressed that they cannot afford to buy?—The corn is very cheap in America; but the working classes get very great wages, and therefore they are able to purchase the corn.

2603. Are you aware that there is a scarcity of population in America, compared with many other countries?—From the extent of America the population bears but little proportion, but the population is very much increasing.

2604. When do you conceive the weavers to have been best off in this country, within the last 20 years?—I will speak with regard to the weavers; they were better off when bread was 2 ½ *d.* a pound, and they getting 20 *s.* and 24 *s.* a week, than they are now that it is 1 ½ *d.*, and are getting but 7 *s.* or 8 *s.* a week.

2605. You have been asked if you have heard anything of the state of Poland; did you ever hear that formerly the Poles, who have now more corn than they can use and they can sell, were once clad in English manufactures?—I have not heard it before.

2606. Do not you suppose it would be a great benefit if they could take your silk goods, for instance, and give you corn for them?—Yes, provided we were sure that our manufacturers would raise the prices of our weaving; but if, as we supplied the Poles with silk, we were supplied back again by France with silk goods here, where would be our benefit?

2607. Do not you know that there never is a purchase without a sale; that nobody gives any article he sells without obtaining some value in return?—Certainly; but here the profit that would be derived from those articles would not reach the weaver, because his labour would not be employed upon the goods; our merchants would buy silks from France and send them to Poland.

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2608. If they produced corn for you, and you produced silks for them, would not that exchange be beneficial?—Not to the weavers; the English merchants would buy the silk goods from France, and export them to Poland. I deny that we can manufacture silk cheaper than France; and if their goods come into the English market, we can send them to Poland cheaper than we can send our own.

2609. Do you deny that we can produce certain articles cheaper than France?—There are articles manufactured cheaper, but then their quality is worse.

2610. Would it not be a better thing that we should produce the articles that we can produce best, and get corn or food for them, than that we should be endeavouring to produce articles for which, as we cannot produce them so well as other countries, the price of wages must be constantly going down?—I do not think it is good for any country to carry on any trade on which the labourer derives no profit; neither do I think it right to destroy one trade for the sake of another.

2611. Do you think that to increase the price of bread would have the effect of increasing the wages of the weavers?—I do not think it would have a direct tendency to raise the wages of labour.

2612. Then if corn were to be advanced in price so as to benefit the farmer, you think that it would not have a tendency to better the condition of the weaver?—That is, provided the farmer be enabled to compete with the foreigner by reducing taxation; then he might be able to pay his labourer sufficient wages, and also get a fair profit upon the corn himself.

2613. What, in your opinion, is the cause of the farmer in England not being able to produce wheat so low as it is produced upon the Continent?—High rents and high taxes, undoubtedly.

2614. Then do you not think that to reduce taxation would be the shortest way of benefiting both the farmer and the weaver?—If you reduce taxation, I have no doubt but there will be a very great benefit accrue to the working classes; but then I think that the state of trade has come to such a pitch that the manufacturer would do all he could to turn the profit into his own pocket. If we had no power-looms, if the manufacturer could not produce the articles which he would send to the foreigner by power, then indeed it would increase the demand for labour: but take the corn laws off, and the power-loom manufacturer will do all he can to increase his machinery to that extent that those goods may be manufactured at the lowest possible price at which they could be obtained. The manufacturer would exchange his cheap goods, upon which no manual labour was performed, with the foreigner, and would receive corn in return; and thereby he would become a two-fold monopolist.

2615. You say that you conceive high rents to be one of the causes why farmers here cannot afford to produce corn at the same price that they do abroad. Are you aware that there are many lands going out of cultivation, which cannot afford any rent, and that upon those lands corn cannot be afforded to be produced at the present prices?—I think that cheapening the corn would not mend that matter, but make it worse.

2616. If there was to be such an importation of foreign corn as to throw a considerable portion of the land out of cultivation, would not that throw out of employment a great number of agricultural labourers?—Without a doubt.

2617. Would the throwing out of employment those agricultural labourers tend to increase the prosperity of the weavers, if those agricultural labourers came into competition with them in the weaving line?—It would have quite an opposite effect, for it is so at present; the Poor Law Commissioners are sending agriculturists to the manufacturing districts. I met about 20 the other day coming into Manchester; I suppose from the south.

2618. Those agricultural labourers coming into the labour market will not tend to increase the wages of the weavers of Lancashire?—Certainly not; they will have a contrary effect.

2619. Do you think it would be any advantage to the British weavers to gain the inhabitants of Poland as customers, if they lost as customers the labourers of the farmers of England?—I conceive that home consumption ought to be looked at first; for if the agricultural labourers of the kingdom were well clad with our manufactures, it would turn to our profit more than if we supplied the Poles.

2620. Do you consider that the agricultural labourers and the farmers of England can be well clad and use the goods that you weave, unless they have a remunerating price for their labour and their produce?—Certainly not.

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2621. Therefore a good price of farming produce in England does react in favour of the weavers?—Certainly.

2622. Did you ever know a time when the agriculturists were well off in consequence of remunerating prices, when the weavers were not well off also?—I do not recollect that it ever was the case but that, whenever agricultural labourers were doing well, it tended to increase the comfort of the manufacturing population.

2623. On the other hand, ever since the agricultural labourers began to decline, 15 or 20 years ago, has not there been a constant tendency to lower the wages and deteriorate the condition of the weavers?—As the circumstances of the agricultural labourer decline, those of the manufacturing department decline also.

2624. Then they have gone together both in prosperity and adversity?—Yes, invariably.

2625. You have stated that you think home consumption ought to be first considered; if your wages were advanced to the price which you had when you first became a silk weaver, and all other weavers in the kingdom were advanced in the same proportion, would not this immense body of weavers and their families be enabled to extend the consumption to a very great amount?—Yes, to a very considerable degree.

2626. Would not this increase of consumption operate beneficially upon those engaged in cultivating the land, because it would give a greater demand for their produce?—Certainly, without any manner of doubt.

2627. You stated that you saw 20 agricultural labourers coming from the southern district into Manchester?—As near as I can guess, men, women and children.

2628. On what day did you see them?—Last Saturday.

2629. How did you know that they were agricultural labourers?—From their dress and appearance, their smock-frocks and their complexions.

2630. How came you to imagine they were agricultural labourers from the south, and seeking employment?—I did not say that they were seeking employment. I surmised that the Poor Law Commissioners sent them down; I do not know it as a fact, but I have a strong conviction that it was the case.

2631. Might they not be persons going down to Liverpool to emigrate?—They did not go in that direction; they went quite in an opposite direction from the Liverpool road.

2632. Did you see them go out of the town?—I saw them in the town, and turn away from the Liverpool road altogether.

2633. What made it enter into your imagination that they were sent down by the Commissioners?—I knew that a recommendation had been sent up to the Commissioners to send down some labourers; and I had a strong inclination to believe that they were persons of that description.

2634. It has been said that the hand-loom weavers might, if they pleased, obtain better employment than that which they are now engaged in; is that true?—With regard to myself, I have applied at various places to obtain employment away from the weaving, and I could not obtain any. I inquired for a porter's situation, and various other situations; and with regard to children, I do think that it is difficult for children to get employment.

2635. What is your reason for thinking so?—I have a lad about 12 years of age, that went to a factory for about a fortnight, and he could not get employment in it at the end of the fortnight.

2636. How long was that since?—Last December.

2637. Did you persevere in seeking for employment for that boy?—The boy was a very good lad, and he actually went against my will; I was disinclined to let him go to the factory, for I am averse to children working in factories.

2638. What wages was he to have?—He was to have 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a week.

2639. Is he still there?—No; I am sorry to say he is not.

2640. What reason have you to be sorry?—I will relate to the Committee the circumstance. He pressed me to let him go to work at the cotton-mill, and he did go; I was very reluctant to let him; he was not three days at work when he received a crush in his head, which terminated his existence in 20 days.

2641. Did he receive that hurt by the machinery?—Yes, by the machinery.

2642. Can you state how?—I was not acquainted with the nature of the machinery, or else I should never have let him go. They put him to work at those self-acting mules; there are no spinners; there is only a lad to piece the ends up; and my lad not being acquainted with the machinery, was busy at work when the carriage

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riage came up, which caught his head between it and the roller-beam, and crushed it in a most dreadful manner.

2643. Then he was under some part of the self-acting mule?—The business of the boy is to be under the mule a certain number of times in the day, to clear the flying away from the machinery; it was in the act of doing that that he received the injury. I have had seven boys, but if I had 77 I should never send one to a cotton factory.

2644. Does the fear of having children hurt, produce an averson in the mind of many weavers to send them to the factories?—I know it is the fact; it is so with me, for I am determined for my part, that if they will invent machines to supersede manual labour, they must find iron boys to mind them.

2645. Are there any other objections to sending children to mills than the fear of having them hurt?—A great many; one great objection that I have is, that their morals are very much corrupted. It is attended with a many bad consequences to send children to factories; I disagree with it altogether.

2646. Will you state how it produces that demoralization?—They have to be in the factories from six in the morning till eight at night, consequently they have no means of instruction; and a parcel of boys congregated together cannot get any solid information, the natural inclinations of the mind being bent to that which is evil instead of good; there is no good example shown them; they have no opportunity of receiving any education.

2647. Then the long hours of working constitute one objection?—One great objection.

2648. Inasmuch as it exhausts the physical strength, and unfits them for becoming such good members of society as they might become if they worked under the parent's roof?—The work not only exhausts their physical strength, but the impure atmosphere that they are continually breathing destroys their health altogether. I can assure the Committee, that if any one of them was to stand at a factory door at meal times and see the wretched looking objects that come out, they would be inclined to adopt any measure, let it be ever so injurious to the commercial community, sooner than have the rising generation injured in the manner they are.

2649. Having yourself taken notice of those wretched looks that you speak of, when you saw those 20 that you supposed to be agricultural labourers, did they wear a better look?—I can assure the Committee that I thought to myself, that if it were the case that they were coming to work at the mills, their ruddy cheeks would not continue very long. I made that remark as I passed along, after I saw them.

2650. The objection to working in the mills on the part of the weavers would be considerably abated if the hours of working were reduced in the manner which they have long prayed for?—I do think it would be so; it is very desirable.

2651. You spoke of the atmosphere being impure and injurious to the health; why is it impure and injurious?—Because they have to heat the rooms so much above the ordinary degree of temperature: when I went to inspect the machinery which injured my lad, I felt an unusual degree of heat; in fact, it is requisite to heat the rooms to a great degree.

2652. Do you know the temperature of heat of the hands working in the fine-spinning mills?—I have heard it stated that it requires 90 degrees.

2653. Does not that approach to the heat of the West Indies?—I believe it does.

2654. And in those 90 degrees of heat they are required to work 12 hours a day?—Yes; the factory that my lad was in works from six o'clock till eight at night.

2655. What time would it take him to walk from your house and back again?—The factory is close at hand, at the bottom of the street.

2656. The distressed circumstances in which you were placed induced you to let him go?—I should never have let him go but for circumstances; difficulties have been accumulating upon me to such a degree, that if I should never be able to pay the debts that I owe, I intended to let him stop but for about 18 months, and then to provide for him a better trade.

2657. You stated that you work 16 or 17 hours a day; have you got into debt notwithstanding all this hard working?—It is a delicate question, but I have got into debt.

2658. The hand-loom weavers have been frequently charged with improvidence and not husbanding those resources which they get from labour in the best manner they

they could do; will you state what has been their practice in that respect?—I do not see how they can save anything; for my part, I have had very good luck when compared with what others have had; I have been employed by one of the best warehouses in Manchester, and provided with the best description of work. Some years back I saved a little money; I did not put it into trade myself, I lent it to another, and he used it to the best of his knowledge, but it was unavoidably lost through the present state of things.

2659. Then you yourself have had savings, and you have lost them by entrusting them to a person in whom you had confidence?—I do not mean to say that it was wilfully lost; I know that everything was carried on right, but such is the state of things, that I believe no working man can rise from his low condition by his own exertions.

2660. But there was no improvidence?—Not in the least.

2661. Have you been a weaver all your lifetime?—No, I have not.

2662. Was your father a manufacturer?—He was an extensive silk manufacturer in Dublin.

2663. A master, you mean?—Yes.

2664. How long is that ago?—He commenced business in 1809, and continued in trade for many years, and made a good deal of property; but he became unfortunate in trade; the introduction of English silks into Dublin, I believe, was one great cause. The manufacture of silk in Ireland was very much depressed by that measure; people failed in his debt, and he lost all his property, and now he is earning his bread by the shuttle.

2665. Was he at one time possessed of considerable property?—I do not exactly know the amount, but I am inclined to think that it was several thousand pounds.

2666. Then with his prospects your prospects were also blasted, and you are now reduced to the necessity of weaving?—Yes.

2667. Did you mean, by a former answer, to object to the introduction of power-looms altogether?—No; I have not thought much upon the subject, and I do not like to give a decided opinion upon it.

2668. With respect to the corn laws, are you aware that foreign corn has been for some time past altogether prohibited by a high duty, and that no foreign corn is now consumed in the country?—I was not aware of the fact; but I do not doubt it, on account of our bread being so cheap.

2669. If there is a total prohibition of the importation of foreign corn, the depressed state of the agricultural interest cannot be on account of the competition of foreign corn in the market?—Certainly not.

2670. Suppose that a quantity of foreign corn was brought into Manchester and offered to be sold 10 per cent. cheaper than the other corn in the market, and suppose the person bringing that corn was to offer to take manufactures in exchange at 10 per cent. higher price than other persons would give, would that be an advantage or a disadvantage to Manchester?—It would be an advantage of 10 per cent. to the manufacturer, but whether it would be an advantage to the labourers I cannot say; it would be giving the manufacturer 10 per cent.

2671. You have alluded to a few agricultural labourers that you saw coming into Manchester with a view of bettering their condition; do not you think it is a very common occurrence in every part of the country for people to remove to better their condition?—I do not think it is so common to come into manufacturing districts, because it is so difficult to arrive at a knowledge of the various trades.

2672. Are there not instances of agricultural labourers learning the trade of weaving?—Yes; because the weaving is scattered through various parts, and they learn it by degrees.

2673. You know there are many persons who come over from Ireland to Liverpool, to disperse themselves to Manchester and Bolton and other places?—Yes.

2674. Do you know what it costs to come over from Ireland by steam packet?—About 3*s.* 6*d.*

2675. And that is much lower than a man can go from the agricultural districts in the south?—Considerably lower: I speak with reference to the passage from Dublin to Liverpool, but I should think it would be something dearer from other parts of Ireland to Liverpool.

2676. You stated that it was the practice for masters to advance money to the weavers

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weavers upon the work, and to stop it out of the wages according to agreement?—I am not acquainted with the manner in which the money is stopped, but I know that it is the practice for manufacturers to advance the money to the weaver to start a figured loom. This money is deducted by instalments, just as the parties can agree.

2677. Does it impose any difficulty in the way of the weaver retaining his employment, his having made an agreement to stop so much out of every web he takes in?—It is the means of his retaining his employ longer; but many weavers borrow money to purchase the materials themselves, and pay it as they can, in order that they may be at liberty to change from worse work to better, and not to be tied to a manufacturer for such a length of time.

2678. That is, that they may be allowed to leave the master, provided they can pay him the money which they owe him?—They borrow the money elsewhere, that they may be able to leave the manufacturer, and procure better work if it can be found.

2679. And without subjecting themselves to their master from whom they take their fresh work; by borrowing money from him they could not make that exchange?—Yes.

2680. Have you every reason to believe that you have spoken generally the sentiments of the body who selected you to represent them here?—I believe I have spoken the sentiments of the majority.

2681. You stated that a child of yours was unfortunately killed in working at a machine; at what age do children generally work at that?—They are not allowed to work till nine years of age.

2682. You say that in the course of that time their moral character deteriorates, and you consider that they learn nothing in that time, and that the mere attending the mill does not instruct them?—Certainly not, in the least.

2683. Then they come from that employment uninstructed in any art except the mere attention to the mill?—They learn nothing except the work they do.

2684. So that it is all lost time?—It is.

2685. You have heard it asserted that labour, like every other marketable commodity, should find its own level; do you think that the wages of the weavers have found their level?—I do not think that the wages of labour have found their own level; yet neither do I think there is a similarity between what is called capital and labour.

2686. Will you state the distinction, as it appears to you?—Capital, I can make out to be nothing else but an accumulation of the products of labour; and the very supposition that a man has capital, includes in it that he has the power of refusing to part with his articles if an insufficient price be offered for them. In the dealings of capitalists with each other, they are generally the one as much in need of buying as the other is of selling, and they can either of them abstain from buying or selling if they consider improper terms are demanded of them. But how stands the case with the labourer? Labour is always carried to market by those who have nothing else to keep or to sell, and who, therefore, must part with it immediately, whether the price pleases them or not, or suffer privations, most likely severe want: labour is always purchased by capitalists, who can abstain from purchasing until they can have it on their own terms, without suffering either privation or want. That, Sir, I presume to call one great distinction essential to the very existence of labour and capital. Another is, that all kinds of commodities (capital or accumulations of the products of labour) having assumed a tangible, visible, substantial form, can be retained if an inadequate price be offered for them, and the fortune of another day, week, month, year, be tried for them, as they will generally keep for some time without suffering much damage; many of them will keep any length of time without any damage at all. But how fares labour in this respect? The labour which I ought to perform or might perform this week, if I, in imitation of the capitalist, refuse to part with it, that is, refuse to perform it, because an inadequate price is offered me for it, can I bottle it? can I lay it up in salt? In what way can I store it, that, in imitation of the capitalist, I may either get the same price for it, or a higher or lower price, as the case may be, at some future period? That I presume to call another essential difference inseparable from the very nature of labour and capital. These two distinctions between the nature of labour and capital, (viz. that labour is always sold by the poor, and always bought by the rich, and that labour cannot by any possibility be stored, but must be every instant sold or every instant lost,) are sufficient to convince me that labour and capital can

never with justice be subjected to the same laws; and I must continue to be of that opinion, until somebody convinces me that these distinctions do not exist, or that their existence forms no real difference.

2687. Do you think that on that account the weaver is more entitled to protection in his wages than the capitalist is?—I do not wish to withdraw what protection capital has, but I do say that labour ought not to be left unprotected. We see the shopkeeper protected by the licence of the hawker, and we see the land protected by the corn law, that both the land and the shopkeeper may pay their taxes; but the labourer, while he pays his taxes, is altogether unprotected.

2688. And what the weavers seek is, that they may have that protection extended to them which is extended to other parties in the State?—Just so.

2689. If there is such a distinction between capital and labour in the way you have shown, is it not a great inducement to the weaver to obtain that advantage for himself, and does not it promote a sort of stimulus to raise himself out of his present condition as a labourer merely earning his daily bread?—It has been a very great stimulus with regard to myself, and I have no doubt it has stimulated others to the same exertions; but I have no doubt that they have nearly all failed.

2690. Do you think that the capital which has been already accumulated would ever have been accumulated, unless with a view to this command over the immediate wants and necessities of the day?—I think that has been the chief view that capitalists have had in accumulating it.

2691. Then do not you conceive it to be part of the design of Providence, that that should be one of the main stimulants to effect an accumulation of capital?—I think that Providence has designed that labour, which is the capital of the working man, should be protected, and not to be taken from him by those that have the power, that is, the capital.

2692. Do you think that the protection you require for labour would be requisite, if there was a good demand for the products of labour?—I do; for it is not long since a manufacturer was talking to me about the corn laws; he remarked, that we would be able to work something cheaper when corn would be reduced; and I asked him, what would that better our situation; "by receiving less wages in proportion to the cheapness of food, we should be just where we are: though you would perhaps export more goods, and get more profit, we would not be benefited at all."

2693. Is the legislative protection that you would require in the shape of a board of trade?—Yes; that is what we have prayed for.

2694. You stated that the opinion of the weavers has run in favour of one general board of trade?—One general committee, if practicable, would, they think, be the best; it would have the effect similar to putting the trade all into the hands of one man, who would be able to carry on a competition with foreigners better than it ever can be done by a great number of capitalists.

2695. What is your opinion of the best manner of managing local boards?—My opinion as to the best plan of managing local boards is this: I will take the silk trade, for example; it is a smaller concern than the cotton. I would divide the country into districts, one to be regulated by London, another by Macclesfield, and another by Manchester; and in fact I would allow every place where manufacturers reside to have their own committee or boards, making sure that no place should be exempt. I would fix a day for choosing the committees; I would require the London committee to meet first; and after they had prepared and published their list, for the rest to proceed in the same manner. I have no doubt that the weavers in other parts would endeavour to get London prices; and the propriety of those would be discussed between the masters and the workmen, and sufficient reasons shown whether those prices could be obtained or not.

2696. Do you approve of a law to compel capitalists to pay the operatives a certain rate of wages?—The weavers do not want a law to compel the capitalist to pay a certain rate of wages; they want a law passed to authorize them to adjust the rate of wages according to the state of the capitalist's market.

2697. Would there be any use in adjusting, unless it made an advance?—An advantage might be obtained, and very great evils would be prevented, by making all manufacturers pay the same price for the same article, for any certain space of time. An avaricious manufacturer, or a needy manufacturer, would not have an opportunity of reducing his wages, and thereby injuring the stocks of other manufacturers.

2698. But you said that the largest manufacturers have been the first to reduce the

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the rate of wages?—I say it would prevent a needy manufacturer, or avaricious manufacturer, from reducing wages, and thereby prevent the great injury to the honest manufacturers' stocks.

2699. You said that it was the great manufacturers who have been the first to reduce the wages in the silk trade?—Yes, and I say it still.

2700. Your view then is, that if there is an uniform rate of wages, according to law, for a certain limited period, say three months or six months, that no manufacturer during that period would have the power of outbidding the rest of the manufacturers, and so setting an example of a reduction of wages?—Not unless he took the difference out of his own profit.

Mr. *John Chadwick*, called in; and Examined.

Mr. *J. Chadwick.*

2701. WHERE do you reside?—At Drogheda, in Ireland.

2702. How were you chosen to come here?—There was a public meeting held of the linen manufacturers of Drogheda, and I was selected to attend the summons of the Committee.

2703. Who was this meeting summoned by?—By the mayor.

2704. Was that the first meeting of the kind that had been summoned?—No; there had been a meeting previously summoned by some of the manufacturers themselves, but it was done at the instance of the mayor. The mayor sent for me, and told me that he had received an order that a person should be sent for from Drogheda: I communicated this to some of the manufacturers, and they met among themselves; and they selected Mr. Ennis, who then consented to come; but he became very unwell a few days afterwards, and declined. There was then another meeting called by the mayor, at which the mayor himself presided, and I was there selected to attend.

2705. Is Mr. Ennis a manufacturer?—He is a manufacturer and merchant.

2706. Were those all the meetings that were held upon the subject?—There was a meeting previous to that at which Mr. Ennis was elected, but I believe it was attended by very few; I was not there myself.

2707. Was there any particular cause that you can assign which rendered it necessary to call so many meetings?—The only cause that I can remember was that there was not sufficient notice given of the first, and it was not generally attended.

2708. Was there any political excitement in the town which produced a discrepancy of feeling amongst the manufacturers?—I do not think so.

2709. Was the meeting at which you were appointed, or the one at which Mr. Ennis was appointed, the most numerous?—I think they were about the same.

2710. Are you a manufacturer yourself?—At present I am not a manufacturer: in the early part of my business I was a few years, but for many years I have been merely a purchaser in the linen market.

2711. How long is it since you ceased to be a manufacturer, and became a commission merchant?—It is 25 years since I ceased to be a manufacturer.

2712. Can you speak from your own knowledge of the state of the manufacturers at Drogheda?—I can speak from my own knowledge as to the present state of the trade of Drogheda, and what it was for many years back.

2713. What is the state of the hand-loom weavers at present at Drogheda?—I conceive them to be in a very wretched state.

2714. Do they work at linen or cotton, or what?—The cotton branch is nearly extinct, and the linen is very much reduced from what it was 25 years ago.

2715. Is that in consequence of the general declension of the demand, or in consequence of the transfer of trade from Drogheda to some other place?—I consider that the cotton department has been superseded by the machinery of this country, particularly the power-loom. The linen branch I think has been lessened by two or three different causes: manufacturers of the same description of linens commenced in Yorkshire, and afterwards in Scotland, Aberdeen and Dundee; and that has lessened the trade of our town.

2716. How many hand-loom weavers do you suppose there to be in and about Drogheda?—At present I think there may be 1,600 or 1,800; I do not think there are more than that in regular employment.

2717. You cannot speak as to the condition of any other district except that of Drogheda?—No.

2718. How

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2718. How many were there 25 years ago in that manufacture?—I should think at least 5,000 engaged in linen, and perhaps nearly as many in cotton.

2719. Do you conceive the manufacture of Drogheda to be altogether in a declining state?—It has declined very much from about the year 1816 up to 1830.

2720. Was the power-loom introduced in 1816?—The power-loom has not been applied to the linen manufacture at all; there may have been some experiments, but I believe with very little success.

2721. How could the power-loom be said to affect the hand-loom weavers in the linen branch?—Because the cotton goods made by power-looms are of so superior a fabric to what were made by hand-loom, that they have superseded the use of linens.

2722. When did the power-loom become generally used in the cotton branch?—I cannot give an answer upon that subject.

2723. Did that begin in 1816?—I cannot say, but our trade began to decline from that period.

2724. Do you remember, at the time when your trade began to decline, whether you attributed it to the power-loom or to any other cause?—We attributed the decline of the linen trade to the commencement of the manufacture in Yorkshire, and afterwards in Scotland; and another circumstance was, the lessening of the export demand. Previously to that there was an export of linens to Spanish America; and that demand has since ceased gradually.

2725. Was that taken out of your hands by the Yorkshire manufacturer?—It was gradually.

2726. Are there any Scotch establishments that employ any of your weavers?—Not in Drogheda.

2727. Are you aware that there are in Belfast?—I am not acquainted with the trade of Belfast.

2728. You stated that the condition of the hand-loom weavers in Drogheda is very wretched; have the wages of the weavers been often reduced during your experience?—They have been gradually reduced from about the period I mentioned when the trade was in prosperity, but I believe there has been no material alteration for the last four or five years.

2729. Has not there been a great stimulus in the export trade of most manufactured goods within the last two years?—I have heard that the state of trade in England has been flourishing, but I am not aware of any export of the linens that are made at Drogheda at present.

2730. At all events Drogheda has not partaken of that temporary prosperity?—It has not; it is a peculiar manufacture.

2731. What were the wages of the weavers per week upon an average about the year 1816, and what are they now?—I have an extract from manufacturers' accounts of the different prices of grey yarn, weaving and cloth, from the year 1812 to 1834.

2732. What were the wages in 1812?—In 1812 the wages for a piece of 78 yards was 15 *s.*

2733. What were they in 1816?—Thirteen shillings.

2734. What were they in 1820?—In 1820 there were five yards added to the length of the piece, and the wages were only 10 *s.*

2735. What were they in 1828?—The length of the piece was again increased to 88 yards, and the wages only 7 *s.* 6 *d.*

2736. What were they in the year 1834?—Another increase of length to 93 yards, and a reduction of wages to 7 *s.*

2737. What will that reduction of wages be, compared with the wages in 1812, supposing you take into account the increase in the length of the piece?—Fifteen yards have been added to the piece, and the wages are reduced more than one half.

2738. Then there is a declension of upwards of 50 per cent. in the wages, notwithstanding an increase in the length of the piece of 20 per cent.?—Yes. I will deliver in a list of the prices of grey yarn, weaving and cloth, in the Drogheda market, from the year 1812 to the present time.

[*The Witness delivered in the same, which is as follows:*]

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A LIST of the PRICES of GREY YARN, WEAVING and CLOTH, in the *Drogheda* Market.

YEAR.	Price per lb. of best Grey Yarns.	Price of Weaving 27 inches wide Linen, per Piece.	Prices of Linen in the bleached state, in the Drogheda Market.
	d.	*s.* *d.*	*d.*
1812 - -	17 per lb.	78 yards wove for 15 –	Sold at 16 ¾ per yard.
1813 - -	16 ½ —	78 - — - 15 –	— 17 ½ —
1814 - -	18 ¼ —	78 - — - 17 10	— 16 ½ —
1815 - -	16 ½ —	78 - — - 15 –	— 17 ½ —
1816 - -	14 ½ —	78 - — - 13 –	— 12 ½ —
1817 - -	12 ¼ —	78 - — - 10 –	— 12 ½ —
1818 - -	14 —	83 - — - 12 –	— 13 ¼ —
1819 - -	14 ¾ —	83 - — - 11 –	— 13 —
1820 - -	11 ½ —	83 - — - 10 –	— 12 —
1821 - -	10 ¾ —	83 - — - 12 –	— 11 —
1822 - -	12 —	83 - — - 10 –	— 10 —
1823 - -	13 —	83 - — - 9 2	— 10 —
1824 - -	12 ½ —	83 - — - 8 –	— 10 ¼ —
1825 - -	12 —	88 - — - 9 –	— 9 ¾ —
1826 - -	9 ¾ —	88 - — - 8 –	— 8 ½ —
1827 - -	11 ½ —	88 - — - 7 6	— 8 —
1828 - -	9 ½ —	88 - — - 7 6	— 7 ½ —
1829 - -	9 ½ —	88 - — - 7 –	— 7 ¼ —
1830 - -	9 ½ —	88 - — - 7 –	— 6 ¾ —
1831 - -	9 —	88 - — - 7 –	— 7 ¼ —
1832 - -	9 —	88 - — - 7 –	— 7 —
1833 - -	8 ½ —	93 - — - 7 –	— 6 ¾ —
1834 - -	8 ½ —	93 - — - 7 –	— 6 ¾ —
1835 - -	10 —	92 - — - 7 –	— 7 ¼ —

2739. In consequence of this reduction of wages, is the population becoming more demoralized?—I cannot say that I have observed any increase of demoralization since I have known the town.

2740. Are they as sober and as regular in their attendance upon divine worship as they used to be?—I think they are.

2741. Do you attribute any of the political disturbance in Ireland to their distressed situation?—Not in the district of Drogheda; they are a very well regulated and quietly disposed people.

2742. Is there any difference in the wages now paid by the manufacturers of Drogheda?—There are two descriptions of goods manufactured: what I have described are what are called the market linens, that is linen sold at the public market; besides that, there are sheetings of different breadths which come under a different rate of wages.

2743. How much can a weaver earn per week, according to the statement you have given?—Upon this description of what we call market-work, which I suppose constitutes at least three-fourths of the manufacture, I do not think a weaver can earn more than 3 *s.* 6 *d.* or 3 *s.* 9 *d.*, and perhaps a good man 4 *s.*

2744. Would that be the average?—That would be about the average, I think.

2745. Is that sufficient to afford him the common necessaries of life?—I think it is insufficient to support him with food, at least with a family, and no articles of clothing can be procured with it.

2746. When wages were reduced, did the manufacturers generally approve of the reduction?—I think the manufacturers have reduced their wages with reluctance, and never till the state of the trade required them to cheapen their goods.

2747. Can a small number of manufacturers in that district, by beginning a reduction of wages, cause the reduction to be general?—The number of manufacturers altogether is very small, and they are very small capitalists.

2748. When there is a reduction, what manufacturers take the lead in reducing wages; those paying the lower, or those paying the higher wages?—I have not made any observations as to the class of persons that commence it. There has been no alteration for the last six or seven years.

2749. Do you know whether there is a different rate of wages paid for the same work?—I think that some manufacturers perhaps give 6 *d.* a piece more to a weaver that they consider a good workmen and a cleanly workman; for the description

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of goods are of bleached yarns, and it is necessary that they should be brought home clean and in good order.

2750. A careful workman, under those circumstances, is worth the additional wages?—Yes.

2751. But for the same class of workmen is there any difference?—I believe it is much the same.

2752. If there be a difference in the rate paid, would it be a benefit to the manufacturers and weavers if some plan could be devised to raise the wages, or to make the rate more uniform than it now is?—I think, so far as the trade of Drogheda is concerned, it is on so small a scale that an interference of that sort is uncalled for and unnecessary. I think there is sufficient competition amongst the manufacturers to advance wages when the state of their trade affords it, and I do not see any disposition amongst them to reduce wages below what they can afford generally.

2753. If there appeared to be a necessity to establish such a thing as a board of trade, could it be done without legislative interference?—It might by agreement between the manufacturers and the weavers, I should think.

2754. Do you think it would be binding upon all the manufacturers, and that some would not have an opportunity of secretly giving an under rate of wages when they had all agreed to give an uniform rate?—I think there could be no regulation that might not be broken through by individuals in that way.

2755. Did you ever know a plan of that kind tried, to establish an uniform rate of wages?—I have heard of there being associations amongst the weavers not to work under certain rates of wages, and to induce manufacturers to advance wages.

2756. Did you ever hear of a regulation being adopted with the consent of both manufacturers and weavers; and after that regulation had been established, of its having been broken through by some individual manufacturer or manufacturers?—I have heard of such things.

2757. Then a board of trade could not be established successfully without some legislative protection?—I should think not.

2758. If there were boards of trade, would you consider it best to have a general board of trade sitting in London for all the manufacturing districts, or would you consider it best to have a local board in each district?—I should consider that local boards would be the most useful, because their attention might be applied particularly to the localities of the place.

2759. Do you consider that if a general board of trade was to make any regulation that should put the Irish wages upon the same footing as the Manchester wages, that that would have a good or a bad effect upon the weavers of Ireland?—I think it would have a bad effect. I consider the Irish trade is mainly supported by the lower rate of wages, and that if the wages were by any legislative enactment raised to what they are in England, it would completely drive the Irish trade away.

2760. Would the same objection lie against a local board of trade, which regulated it with respect to such a district as Drogheda or Belfast?—I do not think it would.

2761. Have you seen the plan suggested by Mr. Fielden in a Bill which he drew up?—I have seen an outline of the plan.

2762. Will you give the Committee your opinion of its principles and its practicability?—With respect to the district of Drogheda, I think it would be almost impracticable, and I cannot see that it would be any benefit either to the weavers or to the manufacturers.

2763. Could true returns of the wages paid by the manufacturers in Drogheda be obtained by inquiring of them and of their weavers?—It might.

2764. Could the probable quantity of goods of each sort made by each manufacturer be obtained in like manner?—It might.

2765. Would it not be easy to select the least number of manufacturers given in such returns, who together make at least one-half of the goods of each sort, in each parish or township where hand-loom weaving is carried on in your county?—I see no difficulty in obtaining such information.

2766. Would it not be easy to take a majority of one or two out of those so selected, who are paying the highest rate of wages for each sort of goods?—Yes.

2767. Would it not also be easy to determine the average wages paid by such majority for each sort of goods?—Yes.

2768. The average wages having been so taken from a voluntary rate paid by

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many in the trade, could any just complaint be urged by any manufacturer against a law which required that no manufacturer in each parish or township should pay less wages than that average?—I do not think there could be any grounds of objection to it.

2769. Would there afterwards be some inequality of wages; that is, would some manufacturers pay the average only, and would others pay something more than the average?—I think there would be a difference; a manufacturer might wish to make a selection of good weavers, and he would not give the same wages willingly to an inferior workman; and besides that, a difference would arise owing to the difference of material. The linens that are manufactured in Drogheda are made from yarns of which the warps are mostly mill-spun of nearly equal quality; but the wefts are of various descriptions.

2770. If the regulation was by piece-work and not by day-work, the rate of wages would not alter with respect to good work and bad work?—I think a manufacturer would be induced to give more to a good workman than to one that would work slovenly, and perhaps spoil the piece.

2771. If returns of wages and of goods manufactured were required by law periodically, and the average wages taken as before stated, would that practice cause a slow but certain rise in the wages?—I cannot suppose that it would.

2772. Will you give your reason why you do not think so?—I do not think that a rise in price could be effected, except by an increase of the consumption of the article, and greater demand for it.

2773. Would such a process create a competition to pay liberal wages, and stay the competition, now so much complained of, to reduce the wages?—I do not think that it could effect that end; it would not induce a manufacturer to increase his wages beyond what he was by law required to pay.

2774. If an Act were founded upon the plan proposed by Mr. Fielden, could it be easily evaded?—I think it would be difficult of operation in the district of Drogheda, and it might be easily evaded.

2775. Will you state how?—In the first place, if the plan were to be commenced upon at present, there would be an average of wages struck, which would be very unsatisfactory to the weaver; it would be so low that he could not subsist upon it, and without an increase of demand or improvement of trade the manufacturer would not advance it.

2776. Would not the average be struck from the average of the wages paid by the higher paying masters?—It certainly would.

2777. Then how would that injure the condition of the weaver?—It would deter the manufacturer from giving out work when he could not make a profit.

2778. Then you think the effect of such a plan would be to drive the manufacturer out of the trade?—I think it would.

2779. Where can he go to manufacture cheaper?—I am not aware of any place where there are lower wages paid for that description of goods; if he could find out a place where they pay lower wages, perhaps he would go there.

2780. Could he find lower wages in England or Scotland?—I should think not.

2781. Then you think he would be driven from the trade?—Not if the advanced rate of wages would still afford him a profit.

2782. But the plan is not to advance the rate of wages, but to make them uniform amongst the manufacturers according to the rate paid by the higher paying masters?—I cannot see in what manner it would benefit either the manufacturer or the weaver in Drogheda.

2783. How would it injure the manufacturer?—I cannot say that it would injure the manufacturer; if he could afford to pay the wages he would go on, but if he could not afford it he would relinquish his trade.

2784. Do you think there is any other mode by which this proposed Act could be evaded?—I think, in the depressed state of the trade, if a manufacturer said, "I cannot afford to pay those wages," the weaver would say, "I will take the piece under the regulated price rather than be entirely out of work," and that would be an evasion of it.

2785. If there were penalties attached to manufacturers giving a lower rate of wages, do you think that would tend to prevent it?—It must have that tendency; but I think it would likewise deter a manufacturer from giving out so much work, and embarking in a trade that would be subject to such a regulation.

2786. You think the chief evasion would be not from the impracticability of getting

getting at the returns, but that it would either drive the manufacturer out of the trade, or lead to the weaver being induced to receive secretly a less rate of wages?—Yes.

2787. Would the power given by Mr. Fielden's Bill be sufficient for settling disputes by arbitration?—I should imagine it would.

2788. Is the trade more distressed now at Drogheda than it was in the year 1826?—It has lessened considerably since 1826.

2789. Do the weavers receive much lower wages now than they did in 1826?—Yes.

2790. Can you state any other causes which have led to that depression than those which you stated at the commencement of your evidence?—With regard to the Drogheda trade, I stated that the English and Scotch manufacturers have interfered with ours, and the export of our linens to foreign countries has ceased since that period.

2791. Do the Scotch manufacturers give lower wages than the Irish manufacturers?—I rather think they give higher wages.

2792. Then how is it that the Scotch manufacturers should drive out the manufacture from Drogheda?—Because they have the advantage of foreign flax and yarn at a lower price than it is produced in Ireland; they spin by machinery; they have linens woven on the spot.

2793. Why cannot they in Drogheda get the yarn as cheap as they can get it in Scotland?—There are no large capitalists engaged in the trade; they are more dependent upon the production of the hand-spinning and the Irish flax.

2794. Is yarn produced anywhere near Drogheda that finds consumption both at Drogheda and in Scotland?—Upwards of 20 years ago there was not only a large export of linens from Drogheda, but a very considerable export of linen yarn, which was spun by women in the interior of Ireland; it was brought to Drogheda and exported in very considerable quantities, but that ceased about the same period that the spinning mills became so extensive in different parts of England; and now, instead of exporting yarn, we import a considerable quantity for the warps of our linens, and they are wefted principally by hand-spun yarn.

2795. Where do you import those yarns from?—Mostly from Scotland at present; the first importations were from Leeds.

2796. Then the reason you pay lower wages than in Scotland is, that you have not the same advantages in preparing the yarns?—Yes, and in obtaining the flax.

2797. According to your experience, you think that if the rate of wages that should be fixed by law were such as the manufacturer could not afford to give, the weaver would be the first party to consent to a lowering the wages, in order to save himself from starvation?—In most instances.

2798. Is there anything else you wish to state to the Committee?—There is one remark I wish to make; there is a different description of goods made in Drogheda, which are sheetings, and on those the wages are rather better, but the bulk of the trade is the market linens.

2799. Have you a linen hall at Drogheda?—We have a linen hall, and that description of pieces are all sold at the public market. If it were necessary to have any proof of the decline of the trade, here is a report of the seal master at Drogheda, which shows a considerable reduction.

[*The Witness delivered in the same, which is as follows:*]

A RETURN of the LINEN sealed in the *Drogheda* Market, commencing the 6th of January 1820, and ending the 4th of January 1834.

For the year	1820	53,697	pieces.	For the year	1828	20,018	pieces.
—	1821	61,866	—	—	1829	16,645	—
—	1822	61,246	—	—	1830	20,659	—
—	1823	50,603	—	—	1831	20,816	—
—	1824	41,944	—	—	1832	16,566	—
—	1825	43,573	—	—	1833	19,910	—
—	1826	32,795	—	—	1834	19,524	—
—	1827	25,244	—				

Fifteen years Return of Linen sealed, up to the 4th January 1834, by *John Blacker*, Seals Master.

Patrick M'Gray, called in; and Examined.

Patrick M'Gray.

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2800. WHAT branch of trade are you in?—The linen trade chiefly.

2801. Are you a hand-loom weaver?—Yes.

2802. How long have you been a weaver?—I commenced weaving first in 1816.

2803. How were you chosen to come here?—I was chosen at a public meeting held in Drogheda in the linen hall, and once before, in a public meeting had in a field near the town.

2804. Were there a great many attending the meeting?—Yes, about 300, the first meeting.

2805. Have you every reason to believe that they chose you because they had confidence in you from your prudent and industrious habits?—Yes; I believe they chose me looking upon me to be honest, and to give correct statements as far as my information is able to carry me.

2806. What do you believe to be the state of the hand-loom weavers in Drogheda?—They are in a very deplorable state as far as regards low wages and low living; of the meanest description.

2807. Do you believe that they have worse living than their neighbours?—Yes, I consider that in general we live worse even than any other trades or mechanical men, with the exception of day labourers.

2808. Do you think that the day labourers are worse off?—No, I consider that they are just alike; but all other mechanical men I consider are much better off.

2809. Do you mean the day labourers in country districts or in towns?—In towns; such men as are not in situations, but looking after an odd day's work: men in situations, such as working in brewery and distillery yards, are better off than the weaver is.

2810. How long is it since you have been in this deplorable state?—I have been so chiefly this last 10 or 12 years, generally speaking; but part of that time I have been in England. I went to England first in the year 1823, and I returned to Ireland in the year 1829; and I have been in Drogheda all my life, except the time that I was in England.

2811. What made you first go to England?—On account of a turn-out between the masters and the workmen; the masters wanted to reduce the wages.

2812. Did they come to your terms?—No, the workmen had to come afterwards to their terms.

2813. Did any other party besides yourself leave Drogheda for England on that account?—Yes, others left at the same time.

2814. How did you fare when you got to England?—I fared there better than in Ireland.

2815. Then what made you go back?—I left England at another turn-out.

2816. What caused the English turn-out?—There was one master who had been down in Lancashire, and when he came up to Yorkshire again in Barnsley town, he informed the manufacturers of Barnsley that the Lancashire masters were getting their work wrought at a cheaper rate, and consequently he gave out some work at a reduced price, I believe of 5 *s.* to the pound, and consequently the weavers unanimously opposed the reduction. The masters and men then assembled, a party of each, before Mr. Justice Corbett, justice of the peace at Barnsley town, and the manufacturers and weavers there came to a decision that the manufacturers should pay all one price, and accordingly they agreed so in the presence of Dr. Corbett, and signed by the signature of Dr. Corbett. But the manufacturers afterwards, as I was informed, when we left England and went over to Ireland, would not give the work unless the workmen would take it; and on account of the turn-out being so fair, as Mr. Corbett observed, on the weavers' part, he passed all the Irish home to Ireland.

2817. You would not take the reduction?—No; I would not act contrary to the voice of my fellow workmen. It was after I went home to Ireland that the workmen agreed to take it at the reduced wages.

2818. What were the wages that you were receiving in Yorkshire at the time you left it for Ireland in 1829?—That would depend upon the kind of fabric.

2819. What was the average?—The gross average earnings that could be

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obtained in Barnsley at the time I left it, would be about 10 *s.* a week; some 8 *s.* and some 12 *s.*

2820. What expenses came against that 10 *s.*?—A journeyman paid 2 *d.* out of 1 *s.* for his winding and his dressing; and for the man in the house that he worked with, he paid him 2 *s.* 2 *d.* a week for his washing, for his lodging, for his loom stand and for cooking his victuals, and for barm to make his bread, and tea or coffee found him twice a day, and to provide sugar himself.

2821. What do you think you cleared out of the 10 *s.*, for your clothing and your food?—Out of the 10 *s.*, I paid 1 *s.* 8 *d.* and 2 *s.* 2 *d.*, making 3 *s.* 10 *d.*; and that left me 6 *s.* 2 *d.*

2822. Had you to provide fire, as well as clothing and food, out of that?—No, that was included in what we paid to the man of the house.

2823. Did you find that sufficient to obtain food and clothing?—Yes, I should be content with it in a reasonable way.

2824. When you got back to Ireland in 1829, had you as much there to live upon as you had before in Yorkshire?—No.

2825. What was the difference?—When I went home to Ireland the kind of work that I went to work on first was what is called the yard-wide huckaback, and by working 14 hours in the day I could earn no more than about 5 *s.* in the week in the gross; and the regulation in Drogheda between a journeyman and his employer was, that he had to pay him 4 *d.* out of a shilling, 5 *d.* for his lodging, and 2 *d.* for his washing.

2826. Then that leaves 2 *s.* 2 *d.* for food and clothing?—Yes.

2827. Was that sufficient to provide you with food and clothing?—I consider that it was no such thing, if the workman was to get what would make him fit to work; I mean good reasonable provisions; but then the weavers are compelled in Drogheda to live in a general way upon potatoes and salt, and nothing else; and I know it to be a real fact from experience, from my own knowledge, a man upon the inferior fabrics in Drogheda cannot earn above 3 *s.* in the week in the gross, or 3 *s.* 6 *d.* at the outside. They are compelled to have their wives and families begging every day in the week, the men that work upon the inferior fabrics, such as what is called market work, which is sold in the hall of Drogheda, which employs a great mass of the weavers in Drogheda.

2828. Will the same deductions come against the lower fabric as you have described against the higher fabric?—Yes, admitting him to be a journeyman.

2829. Then you have 1 *s.* 2 *d.* to deduct from the 3 *s.* 6 *d.*?—Yes.

2830. That leaves 2 *s.* 4 *d.*; then what deduction is to be made from the 2 *s.* 4 *d.*?—Five pence for the lodging, and 2 *d.* for washing his shirt.

2831. Then if you were badly off in receiving 2 *s.* 2 *d.*, of course the weaver of the coarser fabrics was much worse off?—Decidedly so.

2832. Are your wages as good now as they were in 1829?—I am not working on the same kind of fabric, because we must take sometimes whatever a manufacturer has to give us. Sometimes a manufacturer says he has not order for any more of a certain fabric, and then he gives out another sort in its place; and perhaps in one year a weaver may be working upon three or four different kinds of fabrics.

2833. For the same kind of work are wages as high now as they were in 1829?—Certainly they are, with the same manufacturer that I was working for at that time and now.

2834. Is he paying higher wages than other manufacturers?—He is, upon some kinds of work; for instance, yard wide he pays 1 *s.* 4 *d.* more for 90 yards than any manufacturer in Drogheda; and he says he has a good profit. He told me last Saturday evening that the manufacturers of Drogheda could pay more for weaving their work than what they were paying, and have a fair remuneration afterwards for their capital.

2835. Does he employ a considerable number of weavers?—He employs as many as any other manufacturer in the town.

2836. Then, in fact, your wages now are not sufficient to give you the enjoyment of the common necessaries of life?—Not by any chance.

2837. Were you much better off when you first started to be a weaver?—Certainly, I was better off at that time.

2838. Were provisions as low then as they are now?—No, but weavers were much better off at that time; I myself was better off; my father was working and I was working.

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2839. If you are receiving such bad wages in Drogheda, has it never occurred to you to go anywhere else since 1829; into England or Scotland, to obtain other work?—Certainly, I often entertained the idea of going back to England during the last four or five years, but then I could not put myself in a way that I should wish to go; I mean as to having some money in my pocket to pay my expenses.

2840. Are you a married man?—I am.

2841. Have you a family?—One child.

2842. Have other persons gone from Drogheda into Lancashire, or Scotland, or into Yorkshire, to get employment within the last four or five years?—Yes, I know some persons that went.

2843. Do you know whether they got employment at remunerative wages there?—I cannot say as to the wages, but I suppose they have got employment, or they would have returned back again.

2844. Do you hear any account from Yorkshire or Scotland whether there is a considerable demand for workmen that might be thrown out of the hand-loom weaving branch?—I have heard within the last six months that there is plenty of work both in Yorkshire and Lancashire for weavers.

2845. In the hand-loom trade or in the factories?—In the hand-loom trade.

2846. You stated that one particular manufacturer paid a higher rate of wages than the rest of the manufacturers in Drogheda?—Certainly.

2847. When wages were reduced, did the manufacturers generally approve of the reduction?—If men are to be judged of by their actions, they have approved of it, for they were always very ready to imitate one another on that point, with very few exceptions.

2848. Can a small number of manufacturers in your district, by beginning a reduction of wages, cause the reduction to be general?—Certainly.

2849. Do either those who first reduce, or those who follow their example, derive any benefit from such a course?—I am not aware that they do; it is the opinion of the weavers in general that it is the merchant who receives the benefit from the reduction of the weavers, because when reductions do take place the merchants generally hear of it, and buy the cloth accordingly, as I am informed; the cloth is sold so much cheaper to the merchants in general.

2850. Do not you think that the merchant also sells it so much cheaper?—Perhaps he does.

2851. Do you find that the merchants get richer than either the manufacturers or the weavers?—We find from experience that the manufacturers at present in Drogheda, according to all outward appearance, have been gradually getting richer within the last 10 or 12 years, and at the same time within the same given period the wages in general have been upon the decline, and the lengths of the webs augmented.

2852. Did you hear the account given of wages, and the decrease of them within the last 20 years, and the increase in the quantity of the piece, described by Mr. Chadwick in his evidence?—Yes, I did.

2853. Do you agree in the statement he made?—Yes, in a general way I do.

2854. What manufacturers generally take the lead in reducing wages; those paying the lower, or those paying the higher rate of wages?—Those paying the lower.

2855. Are those who are averse to reducing wages governed and controlled by those who are inclined to reduce wages?—Most certainly.

2856. Would it be a benefit to the manufacturers and the weavers if some plan could be devised to raise wages, and to make the rate more uniform than it now is?—Yes, I think so; and I have heard a manufacturer say that he sincerely wished that such a regulation was carried into effect and made binding by the Legislature.

2857. Was he a manufacturer of considerable capital?—Not of considerable capital, because in general they are men of small capital in comparison to the manufacturers in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

2858. Is it desirable that a power to regulate wages should be possessed by those manufacturers who are averse to reduce wages?—Most certainly; that power should be given to the manufacturers that are in the habit of manufacturing the majority of the different fabrics manufactured in the town.

2859. Can you suggest any plan that you think would place the power to regulate wages in the hands of those manufacturers who are averse to reduce wages?—Here is a copy of the resolutions of the committee of weavers, and I will state how it occurred. After I was elected at a public meeting, the weavers being

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at this public meeting divided themselves into wards according to the different districts, and those wards elected two men, and they agreed that this should serve for my instructions in things that I myself might be ignorant of.

[*The Resolutions were delivered in, and read, as follows:*]

Resolved,—That we the linen and cotton weavers of Drogheda assembled, have, for the improvement of our tradè and the advance of our wages, come to the following resolutions:

1st. We propose that two subordinate boards of trade, composed of an equal number of manufacturers and weavers, be established, one of them in Belfast and the other in Drogheda; that these boards be empowered by the Legislature to settle such differences as may occur between manufacturers and their weavers, as regard weaving prices, extraordinary long lengths, &c.; and should they in their opinion and judgment not agree when referred to, the same to be left to the decision of a central board, which we would have established in London for occasional arbitration.

2dly. Now being fully convinced as we are that the present low prices of weaving have in a great degree been caused by competition, we therefore propose that an average price on each fabric of weaving be fixed and unchangeable for three months, and if during or at the end of that period an advance be afforded and given by one or more than one manufacturer, that a new average be struck out and continued for the next succeeding three months; and further, in order to attain an average price of weaving, we propose that one half the manufactured goods be the rule for regulating the average of each fabric; and when any one manufacturer is making the one half of said goods, his price for that fabric shall be the fixed average.

3dly. Feeling likewise that we labour under a great disability in consequence of the increased lengths of our webs laid on the warping mills by some manufacturers who do not pay by the yard, we therefore propose that some satisfactory measure be brought into effect for the prevention of so great an evil.

These our Resolutions to be handed by our delegate to the honourable Committee of the House of Commons for their inspection, praying that they through their goodness and wisdom may assist us, by devising such measures as may appear to them the most expedient to improve the trade, advance the price of weaving, and secure the industry of the weaver from the inroads too long practised on it by some unprincipled manufacturers.

2860. What do you mean by the low prices of weaving having been caused by competition?—Occasionally, when times are very slack and work hard to be got, a weaver comes to a manufacturer and asks him for a piece; he says, "I have no piece to give you, if I give you a piece it will be for God's sake;" or "I will give you one, but if I do, I would rather you would leave it behind you; but if you take it, it shall be at a shilling reduction in price." The starving man of course says to himself, it is better to have a potato than to have nothing, and so accordingly he brings home the piece and works it. Another manufacturer hears tell of this, and he says to his workmen, "I understand that such a manufacturer has got some of his work at a reduced price," and he says to his weavers, "If you do not take it from me at the same price, you shall have no more work."

2861. Then by competition you mean a competition among the manufacturers to reduce the rate of wages, and you think that arises in consequence of a slackness in the demand for the fabric which you weave?—Most generally.

2862. If there has existed this slackness in the demand which has compelled them to reduce your wages for your fabrics, do you think it is probable that the manufacturers can have been getting rich the last eight or ten years?—We consider that they are not compelled to reduce our wages, if they thought proper not to do it. The time when our trade is occasionally slack is in the winter season of the year; there are many weavers about the neighbourhood of Drogheda within two or three miles, and those men are in the character of small farmers; they perhaps hold an acre or two or three acres of ground, and when their agricultural labour is done they return to their looms, and those men having their year's stock of potatoes laid in, they can work for any price for a piece that would keep their house in fuel, candle-light, and salt, and soap, and things of that description; and those men come in the winter season to the manufacturer and ask for work, and take it at any price that the manufacturer may think proper to give them.

2863. Would not they continue to do that if this proposed regulation of a board of trade was to be enforced?—Certainly I consider that they would, unless they were prevented by an enactment of the Legislature.

2864. The enactment of the Legislature would be for the protection of the weaver; and if the weaver broke through the regulation, the manufacturer would not inform against him?—No, he would not, of course.

2865. Then, do you think that if there was a regulation for an uniform rate of wages, that those parties who you now think would work, in the winter time, goods

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at any wages, would not still continue to do the same?—Yes, I make no doubt but they would.

2866. Then the regulation would do you no good?—Unless the manufacturer was prevented from paying less than a certain rate of wages under a penalty. I do not see any other way in which the encroachments of manufacturers could be prevented.

2867. Do you think that these boards of trade could be established without legislative interference?—If they could, I consider that they would be of no use.

2868. Have you seen a plan proposed by Mr. Fielden to establish a regulation upon a different principle?—Yes, I have.

2869. What is your opinion of that plan?—I think very well of it.

2870. What do the weavers who appointed you to come here think of it?—In general, they all approved of it.

2871. Which do they like best, the board of trade plan, or Mr. Fielden's plan?—They would approve of either that would have for its principle to compel the manufacturers not to pay under a certain rate of wages: the principle of the thing is what they look at chiefly.

2872. Can you show the Committee that you understand Mr. Fielden's plan?—I cannot say that I understand it in all its details: I would rather confine myself to the principle.

2873. Do you think that true returns of the wages paid by the manufacturers of Drogheda could be obtained by inquiring of them and their weavers?—Yes, if the manufacturer was compelled to do it; the weaver of course could prove what he receives for his work.

2874. Could the probable quantity of goods of each sort made by every manufacturer be obtained likewise?—I make no doubt of it.

2875. You are aware that those two returns form part of Mr. Fielden's plan?—I am not exactly aware of it.

2876. Would it not be easy to select the least number of manufacturers given in such returns, who together make one half of the goods of each sort, in each parish or township where hand-loom weaving is carried on in your county?—Yes; I consider that generous and sympathising manufacturers would be very willing to make the returns themselves.

2877. Would it not be easy to take a majority of one or two out of those so selected, who were paying the highest rate of wages for each sort of goods?—Yes.

2878. Supposing there were 20 manufacturers making those goods, and supposing that five of those manufacturers were to make half of all the goods produced, would it not be easy to select out of the five the three that paid the highest rate of wages, and then to take the average of the wages paid by those three, and make that the rule for all the manufacturers?—Yes; I consider that such a principle as that would give the weavers in Drogheda general satisfaction, while it would have the effect of even gratifying some of the manufacturers.

2879. The average wages having been so taken from the voluntary rate paid by many in the trade, could any just complaint be urged by any manufacturer against the law that required that no manufacturer in each parish or township should pay less wages than that average?—In my opinion there could be no reasonable objection offered to it.

2880. Do you think that, after the wages had been so fixed by law, that there would be an inequality in the wages; would some manufacturers pay more than others?—I do not suppose that would be the case; perhaps there might be a generous manufacturer to be found who might raise the wages.

2881. Do you think there would be one or two out of the manufacturers at Drogheda that would pay higher wages than others?—I believe there would.

2882. But none could lower during the three months, or whatever was the period for which it was established?—I suppose that three months might be long enough.

2883. If returns of wages and of goods manufactured were required by law periodically, and the average wages taken as before stated, would the practice cause a slow but certain rise in wages?—It is my opinion that it would.

2884. Would such a process create competition to pay liberal wages, and stay the competition now so much complained of, to reduce wages?—I think it would prevent a further reduction of wages.

2885. If an Act founded on Mr. Fielden's plan were passed, could it be easily evaded?—Not that I am aware of.

2886. Would

2886. Would the power there given for settling disputes by arbitration be sufficient?—In my opinion it would.

2887. Are the working classes in Drogheda pretty quiet now?—Yes, they are.

2888. There is no political discontent among them?—No, not any worth much notice. I believe Drogheda to be one of the quietest towns in Ireland; I have never seen much political discontent exhibited in Drogheda, except at the time of an election, when the corporation of that town comes into contact with the inhabitants at large.

2889. Do you ever find the distress of the weavers lead them to political discontent?—No.

2890. Do you mean that the people are contented with their situation?—By no means.

2891. Are they not miserably unhappy, and would they not wish for a change at all hazards?—They would wish for a change, but not at all hazards.

2892. Do they think it possible that any change could affect them for the worse?—The majority of the weavers at Drogheda at present think that it is impossible, for they could not be worse unless to take their life.

2893. What description of work is it that you are now engaged in weaving?—The fabric that I left in the loom when I came away was what we term a two-division diaper, all cotton.

2894. What is the length of it?—There are three cuts in the warp, and each cut when woven measures about 46 or 47 yards.

2895. In what time can you weave one cut?—In a regular way, I suppose I could weave it in about nine days.

2896. You have stated that where there is a difficulty of obtaining work, some manufacturer gives out work at lower prices, and the weaver is induced to take a reduction of a shilling in preference to being without work. Would you yourself rather take that work which you can now weave in nine days, and have the time lengthened to 12 days to weave it in, and have the wages you formerly had, in preference to taking it out at a reduction of wages and weave it up in nine days.—Certainly.

2897. Do you think it would be better for the manufacturer, inasmuch as it would not tend to glut the markets?—I am decidedly of that opinion, and have been a long time.

2898. Are the weavers generally of that opinion, that it would be beneficial both to the manufacturers and the weavers, that there should be a restriction in the quantity of work rather than a reduction in the wages?—Most certainly.

2899. Mr. Chadwick stated to the Committee that there has been a great reduction in the linen trade of Drogheda; do you agree in that?—I agree with Mr. Chadwick that there is far less linen manufactured in Drogheda at present than there was about the year 1814 or 1816.

2900. Mr. Chadwick was understood to say, that one reason of the linen manufacture leaving Drogheda, and going to Scotland and to Yorkshire, was that the spinning of flax in Scotland and in Yorkshire enabled the manufacturers to buy flax upon lower terms than at Drogheda?—Perhaps that may be the case; but I heard a manufacturer last Sunday in Drogheda declare, that yarn could be imported from Dundee in Scotland into Drogheda at about 4*d.* a bundle, an expense dearer than what it was sold in Aberdeen; by the bundle, I mean 20 hanks.

2901. Whatever desire Parliament may have to raise the wages of the weavers, if a law were passed to advance the price of weaving in Drogheda, do not you think that might assist still further in reducing the manufacture of Drogheda, compared with Scotland and Yorkshire?—I do not imagine it would: I believe the men at present engaged in the manufactures of Drogheda would continue to stick to it, even if the law compelled them to pay a higher price than what they do at present.

2902. If the law extended to Scotland and Yorkshire as well as to Drogheda, would they not still stand in the same relative position that they do now?—Yes, certainly.

2903. You think that if a law were passed to prevent men from working beyond a given number of hours a day, it would tend to diminish the productions, and thereby to raise the expenses of those productions, and enable the masters to pay better wages for a smaller quantity of goods produced?—Certainly, I think so;

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so; because it would have the effect, in the first place, of the market not being so much glutted with goods.

2904. You remember that in 1814 the prices were very high, and yet there was more doing in Drogheda than there is now?—Certainly.

2905. And you think that the present prices might be raised without materially diminishing the sales?—I do.

2906. Have the workmen about Drogheda an opportunity of having large gardens: suppose they were limited to one half the work they now have as spinners, have they got little pieces of land to cultivate?—The cabins that the weavers live in generally have their bits of garden to them, perhaps gardens about nine or ten perches long, some 12, some five.

2907. Could they get more if they wanted it?—No.

2908. They could not get two or three acres of land to cultivate with the spade?—No.

2909. Do you think it would be a facility to them if they could?—Yes, if they had the land at a regular price.

2910. You think they could pay a moderate rent?—Yes.

2911. About what rent per acre do you think they could pay now?—I could not answer the question, but I have an idea of what rent is paid for some land about Drogheda; I have been informed myself by men that hold land about Drogheda, that they pay as far as 8 *l.* an acre.

2912. Then if they could get that at 3 *l.* an acre, they would do very well?—Certainly.

2913. And you think that the opportunity of having two or three acres each would be of great service to them?—I think half an acre would be of great service to them.

2914. And if the hours of labour were limited in the factories, they would have leisure to cultivate the land?—Yes.

Lunæ, 13° *die Aprilis*, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Jonathan Hitchin, Esq., called in; and Examined.

Jonathan Hitchin, Esq.
13 April 1835.

2915. WHERE do you reside?—At Bolton.

2916. In what line of business are you?—Manufacturer of muslins; a cotton manufacturer.

2917. Do you employ hand-loom weavers?—Yes.

2918. How many?—From 400 to 500.

2919. How were you selected to come here?—I was selected at a meeting called last Saturday week, at the Session-room, by circulars. The boroughreeve was in the chair. This meeting was attended by manufacturers and weavers, and I had a note to attend the meeting; and I wished to be excused, because it was very inconvenient for me to come; but however they would have no denial; I must go; and I was the person they agreed upon to send up here.

2920. Was it a numerous meeting?—There were not many manufacturers, perhaps eight or ten manufacturers, and a number of weavers were there.

2921. Was any one chosen besides yourself to come up?—There was a person of the name of Makin. I said that if I must go, I should like to take some other gentleman with me, and if they would allow me to make my choice, I should wish for Mr. Makin to go, and it was agreed upon at once that he should go along with me.

2922. Was the direction to the chief officer of Bolton to cause one or two to be sent up?—Only one; Mr. Makin had been before; last year he had been examined,

examined, and on that account, I believe, there was some objection to him; there was no order came down for him, only for myself.

2923. The objection was on account of the expense?—Well, I do not know with regard to that; most likely that would be it.

2924. Have you ever seen Mr. Fielden's proposed plan for the regulation of wages?—Yes, I have.

2925. Were you chosen in reference to your approval or disapproval of that plan?—I had not seen it until after I was chosen.

2926. Mr. Makin has before stated his opinion in favour of Mr. Fielden's plan?—Well, I believe he has, from what I can learn; I had some conversation with him, and I understood that he was in favour of it.

2927. Did the direction to the boroughreeve of Bolton express any wish to have a person adverse to Mr. Fielden's Bill?—I never heard of any.

2928. What is the state of the hand-loom weavers at Bolton at the present time?—Why, the state of the hand-loom weavers at the present time is, they are very much reduced in regard to those comforts which they at one time did enjoy, such as a well-furnished house, and a good bed, and well clothed, and, I may say, well fed; they are not so well off now as they were years back.

2929. How many hand-loom weavers are there in Bolton and the neighbourhood, do you suppose?—As far as I am able to judge (I made some inquiry just before I came off, but I had not time to make that inquiry I should wish to have been furnished with, for I had some other business to attend to which I could not neglect), about 7,000 I should say; but they are lessening very much.

2930. Do you mean weavers, or weavers and their families?—Weavers; what you call operative weavers.

2931. Then, with their families, there would be much more than that?—Yes; these are what I call operative weavers; there are five or six in a family.

2932. But these are adult weavers?—Yes.

2933. Did you read the evidence given by Mr. Myerscough and Mr. Needham last year?—I read a part of it, but I did not go through it.

2934. Did you read the account they gave of the distressed state of the hand-loom weavers at that time?—No, I did not.

2935. You have no reason to believe that they gave otherwise than a correct account?—I should think not.

2936. And that state you also describe to be a very depressed and a very distressed state?—Yes.

2937. Are you aware whether Richard Needham applied to your warehouseman before he came to give evidence last Session before this Committee?—I have no doubt he did.

2938. Did you ever see the statement that he gave of the money wages paid to 458 plain and fancy cotton weavers, men, women and young persons, for one month, taken from your books?—In what year?

2939. In the year 1834?—Yes, I saw the statement.

2940. The result of that statement is, that 528*l.* 3*s.* 10½*d.* was the amount of wages paid for 1,518 pieces for one month to 458 plain and fancy cotton weavers, and that the average to each weaver per week, man, woman and young person, is 5*s.* 10*d.* The necessary deductions out of this, which are always allowed for expenses before they can perform their work, are 3*d.* out of every 1*s.*, which leaves for each weaver, clear money, 4*s.* 4½*d.* per week for food, clothing and other incidental expenses which may occur?—That is correct.

2941. How long have you been in the trade?—I have been in the trade for about 36 years; I am practically acquainted with weaving; in fact, I learnt the art of weaving myself.

2942. Then you began the trade about the year 1799?—Yes.

2943. What was the condition of hand-loom weaving at that time as compared with the present?—At that time it was very good; when I commenced manufacturing, soon after I was married, my first object was to furnish a shop of looms; looms were very valuable at that time, and I got about six pair of looms, which cost me between 30*l.* and 40*l.*; and I was in the habit then of taking in young men to learn to weave, to go into the cotton trade; I had a premium with them, and there were three persons in Bolton applied to me to commence manufacturing just after the short interval of peace.

2944. In 1802?—Yes, about that time; they wished to join me in business.

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I had been manufacturing a little for myself before, and with my own hand-weaving I could have earned then 40 *s.* a week.

2945. Then you, in fact, commenced life in trade as a weaver?—I did.

2946. With a certain number of looms?—I came out of Cheshire. It is a very odd circumstance, that perhaps if it had not been for that circumstance I should never have been in the trade at all. There was a person that came over into the neighbourhood of my native country, near Tartley, and commenced a shop of looms there, and I was so struck with the novelty of the thing, that I thought I should like to learn to weave; my parents were decidedly opposed to it; I was about 14 years of age then. I had some relations that were considerable farmers; they objected to it, but I was so intent upon it that at last they consented. The person was very unfortunate, and about nine months after he was broke up; I was still intent on going into the business, and my father then sent me to learn the weaving. That is the origin of my commencement in the cotton trade.

2947. Did the weaving continue a good business during the war?—Yes.

2948. During the whole of the war?—It fluctuated at times very much, but wages were much higher then.

2949. Then I suppose you gradually obtained more and more money until you were enabled to set up a large concern?—Yes; when I entered into partnership with three others. Things took an unfavourable turn, they were dissatisfied, and we separated, and I have been manufacturing myself ever since.

2950. At what period did you begin to employ a number of men?—In 1804 I began to increase.

2951. How many men did you employ in the year 1815?—I had about from 300 to 400, I dare say.

2952. Then the time that you obtained the capital with which you were enabled to employ so many men was during the war time?—Yes; 1812 was the time that I was most successful in business: I was then making a particular fancy article in shawls, what was called Blue Shawls; I had the trade to myself for about two years and a half, till others got into it, and then they ruined it very soon.

2953. Now supposing, instead of starting in the year 1799 as a weaver, and from thence progressing to a manufacturer, supposing you had started in the year 1816, after the manner you had commenced, do you think you would have been enabled since that time to have accumulated so much as would have enabled you to have set up so large a concern as you have now?—My concern is not a very large one.

2954. But 400 or 500?—Yes; but that is not a large one to what some are.

2955. But do you think you could have employed so many men as you now do if you had began in the year 1816 instead of the year 1799?—The trade has not been so good since that period for manufacturers.

2956. You think they have not got so good profits since that time?—No, I do not think they have.

2957. At what particular juncture was it that this great pressure came upon the hand-loom weavers?—It came on soon after the peace; began to come upon them soon after the general peace.

2958. Was it in consequence of the manufacturers having less profit, that they were disabled from giving so good wages?—There was not that demand, not generally, for the manufactures as there was before; there was more speculation.

2959. Was not there a larger quantity manufactured?—I do not know there was more manufactured.

2960. Were not the exports larger?—I think they pushed the thing rather too much, thinking we should have such a trade as never was known. I recollect Mr. Marsden, when I was in Manchester, saying, when he heard of the peace, he said, there would not be a peace for every parish upon the Continent. However, 60-reeds I was very fortunate in; I sold a quantity of cloths at that time to Thompson of London, for which I got 20 *d.*, and if I had not sold them then, I could not have got more than 1 *s.*

2961. You are aware there has been a great nominal increase in exports since the peace?—Yes.

2962. And that the increase in the exports has taken place without a corresponding demand?—I think there has been a great deal of speculation in exports. I am connected with shipping now; in fact, I ship almost all I make now, and have done for years.

2963. To what country?—Different countries, nearly every quarter of the globe.

2964. Then

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2964. Then you think this great increase in the exports has taken place without a corresponding profit upon it?—I do.

2965. And you think the absence of profit has again re-acted on the condition of the hand-loom weavers?—I have no doubt but it has.

2966. And do you think that was what commenced the depression among the hand-loom weavers?—That and some other circumstances connected with it.

2967. State the other circumstances.—There is one great evil which is practised generally in trade, and that is, manufacturing all embezzled materials; that is a very great evil.

2968. Has that been long in operation?—It was in practice when first I commenced manufacturing.

2969. Do you conceive that this embezzlement of yarn takes place to a greater extent than ever?—I do; I am satisfied about it. I have been in an association for some time back to attempt to stop it; but I find the difficulty is, I cannot put a stop to it.

2970. Do you think that the embezzlement has been greater since the condition of the hand-loom weavers became worse?—No, I do not think it has. It has become greater on this account: at one time there were so many facilities offered to small manufacturers to come into the trade; they can have warps warped at any factory, almost any fancy pattern or plain cambric, they can have them warped, and they go amongst the weavers and encourage the weavers, or encourage the warehouse people that belong to factories, that is, spinners and so on, to pilfer what they can, and they purchase this article from these persons; they hold out inducement. Now these said manufacturers take the cloth when it is wove, and sell it in the grey to houses in Manchester. It had not used to be the case that there was anything of this kind sold in the grey, but now there is an immense business, far more business doing in the grey state than in the white state, and they sell; these sort of fellows they are needy fellows, and houses in Manchester that have capital purchase the goods; they know they must have the money home with them: these houses buy these goods, they send them to the bleacher's, numbered in regular order as their own manufacture; and these said houses can supply shippers at a lower rate than I can, who manufacture the article in the regular way.

2971. You say it is needy men who carry on this trade?—Yes, and there are a vast number of them; where there was one manufacturer when I commenced business, I dare say there are 40 now.

2972. Do you think these needy men are induced to carry on this contraband trade in consequence of the difficulty of getting a profit in an honourable way?—Well, they cannot get a profit: if there was no system of that sort, there would be a profit to be obtained in an honourable way.

2973. You think a profit would be obtained?—Yes, no doubt of it whatever. Now I can mention an instance of a warper, a man who had been with me 11 years; it is two years since he left me, and he gave me notice. He says, "I am going to leave you." I says, "Are you, Richard; what are you for doing?" "Oh," he says, "I am for beginning to manufacture." "What sort are you for manufacturing?" He says, "So and so;" that is, such as I make. Well, my remark was, I said to him, "Richard, how are you for selling your goods?" "Oh, in the grey." "Oh," I said, "I can tell you one thing; you cannot sell them to advantage except you have recourse to this system of mooter, and I expect you will never attempt anything of that." He smiled at me, and said nothing more. He commenced manufacturing, and I met with him a few weeks ago; he stopped me, and he says, "How is business with you?" I said, "I am very slack, for my own part." "Well," he says, "things are very bad with me, I can tell you; there is no selling anything to a profit;" and he manufactures what we call a current article, tape checks; and he says, "I cannot, for my life, sell them to a profit;" and he told me what other houses were selling at. I make the same article; I made my calculation, and I found he could not sell them at that price without selling to a loss.

2974. Is this done from the embezzled yarn?—It is.

2975. This embezzled yarn is bought by them at a cheaper rate?—It is.

2976. And still by buying this yarn at a cheaper rate they are unable to make a profit?—I do not know whether this man regularly purchases in that way.

2977. But generally speaking, with this embezzled yarn they are not able to make a profit?—Yes; I think they have a small profit, 3*d.* or 4*d.* a piece. But

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the difference is very material in regard to what they purchase the embezzled yarn at. There are manufacturers that are letting out warps at this present time; different descriptions of checks. A check, on account of its not being so good to distinguish; the unevenness of the material does not show itself so soon as it does in a plain piece; but they let out warps now to the weavers; they agree with the weaver to give him a certain price for weaving and wefting, they give him a warp and an article that would cost upwards of 4*s.* (I had an instance of that just before I came off); they agree to have it wefted at 2*s.* 6*d.*; now that is a material object.

2978. These are the persons trading in this embezzled yarn?—Yes; what you call a yarn manufacturer.

2979. Will you state how, if a profit is so difficult to be made by persons that obtain the embezzled yarn on such advantageous terms, how a profit can be made to the fair trader?—It is impossible almost to make a profit on goods that are sold, made of yarn of that description, in the Manchester market. That is the reason why I commenced shipper; I cannot do any good myself in the home trade, or else I would prefer it, in the fancy trade.

2980. Is that the general complaint of the manufacturers at Bolton, that they cannot make a profit?—It is.

2981. And you have joined the business of shipper to your other trade?—Yes; I ship most of what I manufacture now.

2982. And with both trades together you make a profit?—It is a very difficult matter now to make a profit, and particularly since this advance took place upon the raw material and the yarn together; it is a very difficult matter.

2983. Are you a spinner as well as a weaver?—No; I buy all my yarn; I am no spinner.

2984. How long have the manufacturers of Belfast complained of this want of profit?—A long time; for years they have.

2985. Have they ever since the peace?—No. The trade fluctuates; sometimes it is better and sometimes worse in regard to profits; sometimes the demand is very great for one article, and at other times it is very slack again.

2986. You stated two causes for the reduction of the wages of the weavers, have you any other cause to state?—I think the increase of power is another, to keep down the price of weaving; that is my opinion.

2987. When did the power-loom first begin to come into competition with the hand-loom?—It has been gradually coming a long time back; for some time.

2988. For more than 10 years?—Yes, I should think it has been as long as that; there is a great deal of cloth that was worked by the hand, that is now working entirely by the power-loom; such as printing cloths.

2989. That comes into competition with the hand-loom?—Yes, it does.

2990. You do not at all remember when the power-loom came so much into competition with the hand-loom, as to cause a reduction of the hand-loom weaving?—I cannot state it.

2991. Have you reason to believe the power manufacturers are obtaining a better rate of profit than the hand-loom manufacturers?—I cannot speak to that exactly; but I am acquainted with some power-loom manufacturers who are shippers as well as myself; being a different article, we communicate with each other, and I find that since this advance took place upon the raw material in yarn, they could get no advance in the foreign market, not a fraction. I was asking a person no longer ago than last Tuesday upon that head, and he is a very considerable power-loom manufacturer in fustians, and other things of that description.

2992. And he was unable to get a profit?—He says he can get no profit in the foreign market; I believe there is too much sent out. It is my firm opinion, the productions are too great for the foreign market.

2993. The foreign market is over-stocked?—Yes; that is my opinion of it.

2994. Is that the reason he assigned for not being able to get a profit?—He says there is too much sent out.

2995. Is he a man of prudence?—Yes; and a man of good capital too.

2996. Is there any other cause that you would assign for the depression of the weaver's condition?—The exportation of twist is another cause.

2997. How does the exportation of twist affect the weavers?—On account of having protecting duties upon all our manufactures, and receiving yarns with no duty scarcely. I suppose that is most in the German states. The late duties that have

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have been imposed on our manufactures in the German states, is operating at this day very much against our manufacture. There is not that demand there was. I was speaking to a printer, who is well known, I dare say; it is a house I have printed a good deal with myself in muslins, and it is about a fortnight since I met with one of the principals of the house, and asked him if he was very busy; he said, "No, quite the reverse to that;" and I said, "Why are you so slack?" "Why we are doing nothing with the Germans to what we used to do." And I said, "The duties are heavy;" he said, "Yes:" he did not state what they were, but however, the next market day I met with his principal man in the warehouse, and I stopped him, and mentioned the circumstance that I understood they were slack. "Yes," he says, "we are;" and I said, "I suppose it is owing principally to our doing nothing with the Germans now scarcely, in consequence of these heavy duties?" "No," he says, "very little." I says, "Do you know what the duties are?" "Well," he says, "I could tell you; a piece of grey cloth that is worth 9*s.* in this market, sent to Germany in that state would have to pay 7*s.* duty."

2998. That would make it 16*s.*?—Yes. Then I said, "They admit our yarn without duty;" "Yes," he says; and I says, "With a view to employ the population?" "To be sure," he says.

2999. Then you think the great facility which foreigners have, from receiving our twist, and the easy terms on which they admit our yarn into their market, encourages the foreign weaver at the expense of our weaver?—I do; that is my firm belief.

3000. Are there any other causes you would assign for the depressed condition of the weavers?—I do not know any particular cause besides.

3001. Have the wages of the weavers been often reduced since your experience for the same sort of work?—Yes.

3002. Is there any difference in the wages now paid by the manufacturers at Bolton?—Not so much I think at the present time as there has been; I think not. They have been nearly stationary in plain, such as plain cambrics, for a few years; perhaps three or four years.

3003. The question referred to this rather, whether the different manufacturers paid different wages for the same sort of work?—Yes; in towns at a distance they pay much less than what we do generally in Bolton; that I know from experience.

3004. And when the wages were reduced, did the manufacturers generally approve of the reduction?—Not generally; very few of the respectable houses approved of it.

3005. Why did not they approve of it?—Because they were confident it would answer no good end.

3006. Why would it answer no good end?—Because it had a tendency to bring down the market and reduce stocks on hand.

3007. It went against those parties who had large stocks?—Certainly.

3008. Can a small number of the manufacturers in your district, by beginning the reduction of wages, cause a general reduction?—Certainly they can; because they can sell when a large manufacturer cannot sell at a reduced price, and they then are encouraged to go on with their manufacture.

3009. Do either those who first reduce, or those who follow their example, derive any benefit by such a course?—A temporary one they may; it is only for a short time, because it becomes general afterwards; the respectable manufacturers attempt to keep up the wages as long as they can, and when they find they cannot, then they all give way.

3010. Then, supposing there is any prospect of a foreign competition, are they not sometimes obliged to reduce the wages in consequence of a fear of foreign competition?—In what?

3011. In the goods that they are producing?—I do not think there is much to be dreaded about foreign competition. In regard to what do you mean?

3012. Foreigners producing the same goods cheaper.—I should not think there is much risk in that myself. They do not import goods into our market; what they manufacture is for their own; for what we call domestic purposes generally.

3013. Do you think, however low we might reduce wages, in order to favour our foreign trade, that the foreigners would increase their import duties so as still to exclude our goods?—If they can be supplied with yarn, no doubt they would.

3014. Is there any prospect of our being unable to supply them with as much yarn as they require?—No, I think not.

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3015. Do you think we could furnish all the world with yarn?—I think we could, and more, if it were necessary.

3016. How long do you think they will remain satisfied with our sending them yarn?—I cannot speak to that, it is a subject I have not studied myself; but it must be a great number of years I think before they can arrive at any perfection in spinning; I should think all over the continent of Europe, it must be a great number of years before they can arrive at any perfection in spinning. I should think so.

3017. Why will it be a number of years before they can arrive at any perfection in spinning?—Because there are not those facilities there as what we have here. To be sure we are sending machinery abroad, and that facilitates the progress.

3018. If they had taken the weaving into their own hands, do you see any reason why they should not ultimately take the spinning also?—They may take it in time.

3019. Does it require great capital and very expensive machinery to spin?—I have no doubt it requires great capital; I am no spinner myself, but from what I heard stated, it requires very considerable capital.

3020. Do you think that is the reason why they can undertake the weaving when they cannot undertake the spinning at present?—The weaving is a very trifling matter.

3021. What manufacturers take the lead in reducing wages, those paying the lower or those paying the higher rate of wages?—Generally the lower.

3022. Are those averse to reducing wages governed and controlled by those inclined to reduce wages?—They are obliged to follow; they are compelled, though against their inclination, to do it.

3023. Would it be a benefit to manufacturers and weavers if some plan could be devised to raise wages and make the rate more uniform than it now is?—It would be a very desirable thing if some plan could be adopted to prevent wages going so very low. But I think there are great difficulties; I should think so myself; it is a subject I have never studied myself, but I should think there are many difficulties in the way.

3024. Is it desirable that the power to regulate wages should be possessed by those manufacturers who are averse to reducing wages, rather than with those who are disposed to reduce wages?—Yes, I should think it would be much better to rest with them.

3025. Can you suggest any plan you think would place the power to regulate wages in the hands of those manufacturers?—I cannot; I have not given it a thought, and therefore I could not at all suggest any plan.

3026. Would legislative interference be necessary to obtain that object?—Well, I do not think they can manage it without something of that sort, not to bring the thing to a point, so that it would be binding; because there have been several attempts made, and they have always failed hitherto.

3027. Will you describe any attempts that you have known?—I have forgotten now how many years it is; but there was a meeting called, and I was one that was deputed to go along with Mr. Gardner Taylor to Preston; but it all failed.

3028. Was it agreed upon conjointly by the weavers and manufacturers?—Yes, that there should be an advance take place; but we could not bring all the manufacturers to the same way of thinking; some were averse to it, and would not be under such a regulation.

3029. It never was brought into operation at all?—No, never.

3030. Do you know any instance where manufacturers and weavers have agreed together to have a regulation with respect to wages, that that did come into operation, and was successful for any period of time?—No; no general arrangement of that sort; there was at that time a partial advance with some houses. They advanced under certain conditions, that it should continue for a certain period; if all others came up to it they would continue it: but, however, it was not the case.

3031. There was no legal control over the lower paying masters, and they broke in on the regulation of the higher paying masters?—Yes.

3032. Do you think that in that instance the efforts of the higher paying masters would have been successful, provided there had been a law to bind the lower paying masters?—Yes, perhaps it might have been; there would be some difficulty. I could not speak to it exactly whether it would not be possible, after all, to evade on certain points; it is a most intricate thing to interfere with; that is my opinion of it.

3033. Could true returns of the wages paid by the manufacturers in Bolton be obtained by inquiry of them, and of their weavers?—Yes, I think it possible; a thing of that sort might be done.

3034. Could the probable quantities of goods of each sort made by the manufacturer be obtained in like manner?—There would be a great many difficulties attending it; a great many, no doubt there would. There is such a variety of descriptions, even in one reed; for instance, a 60-reed varies very much in regard to the fineness of the materials that it is wrought from; there would be very great difficulty in coming at a correct statement; there would be evasion without end, no doubt.

3035. You think a return of the quantity produced by each manufacturer would be difficult?—Yes, in consequence of the fineness of the materials: now I will give you just an instance; some manufacturers of the 60-reed cambrics put 60-twist, others 80, others 90, others 100, others 110, and others 120; and the finer it goes the more difficult it is for the weavers.

3036. What would be the difficulty to the manufacturer of returning the quantity of goods of each sort made by him?—Why, the difficulty would rest entirely with the manufacturer, whether he would return a true statement or not; if a person was inclined to take an undue advantage he could do it.

3037. Then you think, in the case of wages, the weavers would act as a check upon the manufacturer; but in the return of the quantity of goods, the manufacturer would be unchecked by the weavers?—Yes.

3038. Do you think that difficulty could not be overcome in any way?—I do not know, I am sure. It would be a difficult matter, I should think. I should not like to give an opinion on matters of that sort.

3039. Has there not been a duty sometimes laid on several fabrics?—Yes, on printed calicoes; there was a time when there was a duty on all printed goods.

3040. Was it not necessary to ascertain the quantity manufactured when that duty was levied?—Yes; but I should think that is a different thing entirely from what you were stating in regard to the return of a manufacturer; that was under the Excise duty, to be sure.

3041. Still when there was a law to ascertain the quantity produced, in order to lay a tax upon it, that law was not evaded to your knowledge, was it?—No; I believe there have been instances where it was evaded, too.

3042. But, generally speaking, that was the exception rather than the general rule. But if the quantity could be ascertained in one instance, under one law, is there any reason to suppose it could not be ascertained under another?—But then, would it be material with regard to the price of weaving; is it a material point?

3043. No, it is the quantity. Could a return be obtained of the probable quantity of goods of each sort made by every manufacturer?—Yes, that might be obtained; now I understand the subject better: yes, that might be obtained.

3044. Would it not be easy to select the least number of manufacturers given in such return, who altogether make at least one-half the goods of each sort in each parish and township, where hand-loom weaving is carried on in your county?—That might be ascertained.

3045. Would it not be easy to take a majority of one or two out of those so selected, that are paying the highest rate of wages for each sort of goods?—Yes, that might be obtained.

3046. Would it not also be easy to determine the average wages paid by such majority for each sort of goods?—Yes.

3047. The average wages having been so taken from a voluntary rate paid by many in the trade, could any just complaint be urged by any manufacturer against a law that required that no manufacturer in each parish or township should pay less wages than that average?—Why, for my own part, I should like a thing of that sort to be done, but I know it would not be generally approved of; that I am sure of; it would not be generally approved of.

3048. Do you mean by the weavers?—By the general body of manufacturers; I am certain there would be great difficulty attending it; still I always was an enemy to lowering wages. I was always an enemy to it; and if any plan could be adopted to prevent wages going lower, it would be very desirable.

3049. Did the meeting which selected you give you any instructions as to what you should say upon that subject?—Not a word, for I came off without any instructions whatever, and without collecting such information as I could have wished,

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wished, for I had two shipments to get off, and I was occupied till the very day I came off.

3050. Would they have sent you here, do you think, if they had not had confidence in your judgment?—The weavers, I believe, as a body, wished me to go on account of my principle as it regards lowering wages. I always resisted that, and never was the first to commence lowering wages—never. If any plan could be adopted so as to keep wages steady, it would be very desirable.

3051. After such an average was taken of the wages, and such a regulation made with respect to the wages, would there afterwards be some inequality in the wages; that is, would some manufacturers pay the average only and others pay something more than the average?—If there was a law to compel them, they must all pay alike.

3052. The law would merely be with reference to the minimum?—Yes, to fix a minimum.

3053. And of course it would be at the option of any manufacturer to pay his workmen a higher rate of wages than the minimum?—Yes, certainly.

3054. Do you think that that mimimum could be stationary?—I do not think it could; not under the present circumstances of the manufacturer.

3055. Will you state why?—If you legislate for the hand-loom alone, I do not think it is possible.

3056. Is there any other way by which we can legislate with respect to the power-looms, that would suit legislation in the hand-loom?—I make the same article by hand that is made by the power, and there is a great difference in the wages; a very great difference there is. I make 60-reeds by hand; I make 50-reeds, and I make what we call shirtings, two descriptions of shirtings, both by hand, and I shall have to give them up in consequence of the competition from power: therefore if you legislate upon the hand-loom, you must include power; that is my firm opinion.

3057. Did you ever hear of a proposition to limit the hours which the power-loom should be worked a day?—No.

3058. What do you think of such a proposition?—That is a proposition I have never given any thought; I never gave it any attention.

3059. Could you state what the difference of the wages is?—What, between power and hand?

3060. Yes, in the cloth which you make?—Yes, I can give you a correct statement: there is what we call a five-quarter cambric, I gave 5 *s.* for 20 yards, that is a 50-reed; the number of picks is 110. The next is a 60-reed, 120 picks, 24 yards, for which I gave 6 *s.* Well now, I will give you the price of the power: I will begin with the 50-reed cambric, 110 picks, 1 *s.* 9 *d.*; 60-reed, same description, that is, the same length, 120 picks, 2 *s.* Well now, then there is the shirtings; a 50-reed shirting, $\frac{5}{8}$ths, 110 picks, 5 *s.*, 24 yards; a 60-reed, 124 picks, 6 *s.*, 24 yards. Now I will give you the same price by power: $\frac{5}{8}$ths 50's, 106 picks, 36 yards, 2 *s.* 10 *d.*; they are a third longer than mine. The next is 60-reed, 114 picks, 36 yards, 3 *s.* 3 *d.*

3061. Now, what difference do you make in the wages per week of the power-loom and the hand-loom weavers?—There is one description I know they give less for than even the 60-reed, they are wove at 1 *s.* 10 *d.* a piece, and one weaver will produce four pieces a week; we will say 2 *s.*, that would be 8 *s.* a week.

3062. Can you state upon the average?—That is power.

3063. But we want to compare the earnings per week of the hand-loom weavers and the power-loom weavers?—There will not be much difference; the hand-loom, I would say, for 60-reed will average 6 *s.* a week. There are weavers that weave more, what we call good workmen; there are others perhaps that would weave a piece and a half a week, while another will not weave above a piece.

3064. What is the average one man can get a week by hand; a fair working man, working regular hours?—On this description of cloth he will not average above 6 *s.* a week.

3065. You think he cannot work more than one?—Yes, there are some men more active than others.

3066. But a fair worker?—No, a fair worker will not, not regularly.

3067. Then, if the hand-loom weaver gets 6 *s.* a week, what do you think the power-loom weaver gets?—The power, according to this, 4 pieces a week would be 8 *s.*

3068. You

3068. You think a power-loom weaver may get 8 *s.* where the hand-loom weaver gets 6 *s.*?—Yes, in this common sort of work.

3069. Do you think that 8 *s.* is sufficient for a weaver to have the comforts and the necessaries of life?—Why, I should think it a very bare thing myself.

3070. Then even the power-loom weaver, who has not to dread the competition of the hand-loom weaver, he is not in any particular prosperous state?—No, I do not think he is myself. There are some that in some factories get more. Now, I am informed that these 60-reeds that are worked by power, (they are what is called piecers,) some of them have a spinning-wheel that they manage four looms instead of two; one weaver manages two looms.

3071. A man weaver?—Yes, a man weaver; and he turns out two pieces a week from each loom.

3072. But, generally speaking, men are not employed at the power-loom; I mean men beyond 21, 22 or 23?—Yes, men I think are.

3073. Because I have seen young women, 12, 13, 14, 15?—Yes; in fact, I think they would prefer in some places women to men, because men sometimes are rather turbulent, not good to manage.

3074. What, in your opinion, would be the effect upon the wages of the power-loom weavers, if a great many of the hand-loom weavers were withdrawn from hand-loom weaving?—I should think the effect would be not different from what it is.

3075. Suppose a great number of hand-loom weavers were no longer weaving by hand-loom, and that that work was done by power-looms, do you think the wages of the power-loom weavers would be increased?—I should think not.

3076. Would it not be increased, if there was a greater demand for power-loom weavers?—There is no end to the power.

3077. But there is no end to hands?—I do not know for that; the power they may increase to any extent, and it does not require a first-rate weaver to overlook a power-loom at all.

3078. But if a power-loom weaver is receiving such insufficient wages, do you think that a great number of hand-loom weavers going into the market to compete with him in power-loom weaving, would have a tendency to raise his wages?—I should think it would not.

3079. Then the natural tendency would be the other way?—I think they would produce still more.

3080. Can you assign any cause why the power-loom weavers are receiving such bad wages?—I think it is the over production; the great competition. That is my opinion of it.

3081. Do you mean under consumption, or over production?—There are too many goods produced now in silk looms; the power is going, whether you can sell your goods or not: the power is producing continually. Now a manufacturer that manufactures all by the hand, he can draw in according as he finds the market; and any prudent man would attempt to do it, generally speaking.

3082. Do you think that the people of this country, the agricultural portion of the community, consume as much of the fabrics woven by the power-loom, as they might do if they were better off?—No doubt they might consume more if they were better off; but it is a subject I have not given my attention to at all.

3083. Could the weavers consume more if they had better wages, do you think?—No doubt they would both be better clothed and better fed; no doubt of that.

3084. Now what are the hours per week that the hand-loom weavers are obliged to work to receive this 6 *s.* a week?—I should think it would take them 12 hours, or thereabouts; not regularly; they do not work so regular as they do when they are under rules in a factory.

3085. Do they receive regular employment, the hand-loom weavers?—There is a difficulty at times in obtaining work; at times there is.

3086. Are those stated periods in the year?—They used to be particularly so against spring or autumn; they had goods adapted for each season, but it is very different now.

3087. Do you think the hand-loom weavers can obtain 6 *s.* a week on an average throughout the year?—No, they will not average that, one with another.

3088. What would they average, do you think?—I should think they would not average that at the present low rate of wages.

3089. You stated that you think there is no profit in the home trade, and that

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was the reason why you were obliged to go into the foreign trade; to what do you attribute the cause of there being no profit in the home trade?—The manner that I used to dispose of my goods was to the Manchester houses; and, as I have stated before, I have been driven out of that trade merely by these small manufacturers, who manufacture such a quantity of goods, from that very system of embezzled materials. There are some large houses in Manchester that encourage these said fellows to bring their cloth, and they buy it regularly under market price, so as to fit the country people lower than we can.

3090. Do you think that one main reason?—One main reason why I would not contend with the home market, and turned my attention to shipping.

3091. I think you stated that these persons who are selling at this under rate do not get a profit?—No, it is a difficult matter; they run the trade down so, that they find it themselves a difficult matter; there are some few whom it answers for perhaps.

3092. And yet this system of embezzlement has gone on ever since you entered the trade, 36 years ago?—Yes, but it is still more extensive, and I think it would be a very desirable thing to legislate upon it.

3093. Upon this system of embezzlement?—Yes, that is my opinion; it would destroy confidence between the buyer and the seller. As the Act stands now, it requires a third person to give evidence before you can convict; but if neither the buyer nor the seller were made culpable, it would destroy confidence.

3094. Did you hear Mr. Gardner's evidence with regard to his proposal in reference to embezzlement?—No, I have not heard it.

3095. Would you have a jury sit over the goods, and give an opinion whether it was the property of a particular party or not?—I think that would be a very desirable thing; because, I was a party that seized a quantity of this embezzled stuff; I was one that was connected with it, and it failed in consequence of some informality or other; the difficulty in identifying the different articles.

3096. Was it your own manufacture?—No, it was not my own.

3097. The difficulty is—?—In identifying whether they are embezzled or not. There was a skip, I will say, that had perhaps two cwt. in it; that skip contained perhaps six or eight different descriptions of cops that had been collected; all numbered.

3098. But the difficulty is, you are obliged to swear to the identity of your own cloth?—Yes.

3099. And you think it would be quite sufficient if a jury were to sit over the cloth and give their opinion whether it was yours or not?—Yes.

3100. Now do you think that the present high rate of price for yarn is the principal cause of the increase in this system of embezzlement?—It has a tendency to encourage it.

3101. Had the increase began before yarn rose so high as it is now?—Yes, it has been on the increase for years, and still is.

3102. Do you think it would cease if yarn were to fall?—No.

3103. Then cannot you give an opinion as to what you conceive to be the general cause of the increase of this system of embezzlement?—It is unprincipled persons who are got into the trade; idle unprincipled persons, and there are a vast number of them.

3104. Can you attribute it either to the necessitous state of the weavers embezzling, or to the necessitous state of the smaller manufacturer, who cannot get a profit in a fair way?—It is that description of persons; and I say those are not men of principle; they do not like following close work; they would rather follow a living of that sort; they begin manufacturing, and they go round to the weavers and encourage them.

3105. Do you think there are more unprincipled men in the country now, than there were 36 years ago?—I think there are more about us than there were.

3106. Can you assign any reason why there should be more unprincipled men now than there were 36 years ago?—There is more population.

3107. But I think you admitted that embezzling did take place many years since?—Yes.

3108. Now if returns of wages and of goods manufactured were required by law periodically, and the average taken as before stated, would the practice cause a slow but certain rise in wages?—I cannot think it would.

3109. Will you state why?—There must be less production before that can be accomplished; that is my opinion.

3110. Do you think that the plan proposed by Mr. Fielden would not have a tendency to curtail the hours of labour rather than to reduce wages?—I cannot speak to it, whether it would have that tendency or not.

3111. Do you think it is an evil when there is an absence of profit or a slackness of demand, for the weaver to work more hours, or the manufacturer to cause more stuff to be worked up, in order to obtain a higher profit?—No doubt it is an evil.

3112. Then would you approve of a curtailment of the hours of labour, rather than a reduction of wages?—I would rather agree to a plan to work a shorter time for a certain period than reduce wages.

3113. Would not that be one of the effects produced by a plan such as has been proposed by Mr. Fielden?—What, to curtail the hours of labour?

3114. Yes.—I do not know whether it would have that effect or not; perhaps it would. If I were obliged to pay a certain price, of course I should look out first to see whether I could obtain higher prices for my goods in the market.

3115. If you could not?—Well, then I should not make the article.

3116. Then you would shorten the hours of labour?—Yes.

3117. Then the natural effect of that would be to produce such a result?—Yes.

3118. Would such a process create a competition to pay liberal wages and stay competition, now so much complained of, to reduce wages?—I do not think it would have that effect; my opinion is that no good can be done for the hand-loom weavers, except you legislate for the power also, you must include power along with it; that is my firm opinion.

3119. If an Act founded on Mr. Fielden's plan were passed, could it be easily evaded?—I cannot speak to that.

3120. Would the power there given for settling disputes by arbitration be sufficient?—I should think so; it should be conclusive; I would have no appeal or anything of that.

3121. Is there any difference in the price of weaving between Preston and Bolton?—Yes; not much, I believe.

3122. What should you consider?—I cannot speak exactly, but I understand there is not much; there was a man went over the other day to get some information; he did not go on my account; he is one I employ to buy linen, and he got some other information respecting some kind of fancy goods I make, 50-reed spotted cambrics, and they pay 1 *s.* less at Preston than what we pay; that is in the neighbourhood of Preston, not exactly in Preston.

3123. Do you consider that a weaver can live cheaper at Preston than at Bolton, in consequence of the cheapness of provisions?—I should think there is not much difference; very little.

3124. You spoke of a six-quarter piece of muslin?—Yes.

3125. Well, if you were to learn that Mr. Gardner gives 6 *s.* 9 *d.* for that kind of work, and that Horrocks and Jackson give 6 *s.* 6 *d.* for it, and you yourself only give 6 *s.*, are we to infer that you are actually giving now 9 *d.* less than Mr. Gardner, or that there is some difference in the work?—There is a great difference in the number of picks; did Mr. Gardner mention the number of picks?

3126. He gave 120 picks.—Well, now, though we ask them to put on our full extent, we take them very often at 10 picks in an inch less than what we ask, and there is a great difference again in regard to the fineness of the materials, Mr. Gardner makes his generally very fine, and so does D——, now our make is generally 6 *d.* above what the general make for 60-reeds is; there is lower than ours; there is as low as 5 *s.* and 5 *s.* 6 *d.*, which made a little difference.

3127. But then, supposing that a board were formed, and you had to report a list of prices, how would you designate those three kinds of makes, would you put them all under one head?—There would be some difficulty as regards that.

3128. They would have to be classed under three different heads, would they not?—Yes, you must have the number of hanks; we will say, I put 60-twist, Mr. Gardner might put 90-twist for some reed, that would require more wages, for the finer the twist is the more difficult it is.

3129. And that would create a good deal of trouble in the returns?—Yes.

3130. They must be made exactly, or else you would not arrive at the real money wages given?—A manufacturer, if he were not a man of principle, might evade it, he would not give you the fineness. There would be some difficulty about it.

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3131. Might not they be distinguished by different numbers, so as a return could be made that could not with any fairness be complained of?—Yes. There is another thing I forgot to name; now Mr. Gardner's and Mr. Horrock's, I will be bound, are four inches wider than what ours are; I will be bound they are. We make ours for a certain market, and if they go beyond a certain width they pay an additional duty for the export trade.

3132. Does Mr. Gardner's cloth, for which he pays 6 *s.* 9 *d.*, require more work of the weaver than the cloth for which you pay 6 *s.*?—There is more winding and more dressing; more labour for the weaver, and it is more difficult, for it is made out of finer materials than what ours are; it is more difficult for the weaver to work.

3133. Then the weaver has to do more work in weaving a piece of Mr. Gardner's than he has in weaving your piece?—Yes; if it be according to width and fineness, I dare say the wages will be as nearly equal as can be; I have no doubt they will.

3134. Now, you have stated you have been a weaver yourself?—Yes.

3135. And therefore you consider yourself competent to judge of what a fair average weaver can earn in a week?—Yes.

3136. When you commenced weaving 36 years ago, in what time could you weave a 60-reed cambric, such as you now weave?—I could weave a piece in a week, and that is considered a good week's work, regular. There were others perhaps at that time would weave a piece and a half a week.

3137. Some superior hand?—Yes, a superior hand.

3138. And working longer hours?—About the same hours; some perhaps would work a few hours longer in the course of the week than others, but there always was that difference, and always will be.

3139. Your experience has led you to conclude that some workmen are to be found superior to others?—Yes.

3140. That is, to execute the same work in much less time?—Yes.

3141. In any branch of business you are acquainted with?—Yes, that is what I am satisfied about.

3142. Then what would be the work in a 60-reed cambric, that a fair average workman could execute in a week now?—I do not think he would work more, not a fair average workman, little more than a piece a week; it might be some little, not much.

3143. Could he be complained of as being an indolent man, if he worked up 52 pieces in a year?—No, he would be a very good workman.

3144. He would be considered a very diligent workman?—Yes, he would.

3145. What, if he wove one of those pieces for which you give 6 *s.*?—Yes, 52 pieces in a year, if he was a moderate workman. It is considered, generally, that one piece of 60-reed is on an average as much as a person can get through.

3146. You have stated embezzlement to be one of the causes of the depreciation of wages?—Yes; it is a most grievous cause at present.

3147. Do you think that the poverty of the weavers has at all been instrumental in inducing them to embezzle their master's work?—Why, there may be some instances of it, but I do not think that is the prevailing motive. There was a circumstance occurred at my warehouse, about three weeks ago; I was speaking to a respectable weaver about this embezzling system; I said, the weavers were the greatest enemies to themselves in regard to selling this mooter to these small manufacturers; he says, "you are right, I am decidedly opposed to it myself;" and, he says, "I will tell you an instance which happened no longer since than the other day; one of my neighbours sold a pound of 60-weft for 10 *d.*;" he said it was under peculiar circumstances, she was in distress, and was obliged to sell it, and she sold it to one of these manufacturers for 10 *d.*, which was worth at the same time 1 *s.* 8 *d.* That weaver mentioned this as a fact to me.

3148. Has the falling off in profits, and the difficulty of these small manufacturers to obtain a profit, been at all a cause of their risking the purchase of these embezzled materials?—I do not know for that exactly, but it is a system that they commence with; they commence with the system, and they continue in it, and will continue it while they manufacture.

3149. Do they commence with this system, knowing if they commenced with the system of buying materials at the bare market price, they could not make way at all?—No, they could not make way.

3150. And therefore they are induced to adopt this system from the difficulty they

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they would find in making way by pursuing an honest system?—Yes, that is exactly the case.

3151. Now, you have spoken of the power-loom as being one of the causes of the reduction of wages; do you know how far the wages had fallen before the power-loom was introduced, from the time you commenced being a manufacturer?—No, I cannot speak to that point, I have no recollection exactly, but since power did commence, there have been certain descriptions of cloth taken from the hand-loom weavers and manufactured by power. There was a time when Horrocks of Preston used to put out all their printing cloths in Bolton, the $\frac{9}{8}$ printing cloths; the printers generally came there at a certain season, and gave their orders to be ready at a certain time. Well, that caused a competition among the manufacturers, they offered extra wages in order to get weavers, and that caused an advance to take place, but it is a great many years since, that is now.

3152. Was Horrocks as early almost as any in beginning the use of the power-loom?—I cannot speak to it. It is but very recently since I turned my attention to it, and particularly since I began making this very article. I was persuaded to make $\frac{9}{8}$ shirtings of a certain width for a certain market, and I have got, I dare say, 3,000 pieces now on hand, and cannot dispose of them, and it is in consequence of competition from power, and I intend to decline making them. I gave notice of it before I came off.

3153. When you commenced weaving, did you weave 60-reed cambric, or some other description?—Sixty-reed, and all kind of fancies.

3154. Do you remember the price paid to weavers for 60-reed when you commenced weaving?—About 30*s.* at one time; there were very few of them made then.

3155. Are you aware at all of the time when the power-loom was introduced any where, within a year or two?—I cannot speak to it, I am sure, or anything like it. It is only very recently since I turned my attention towards power, because I found I was a little interested in it.

3156. Do you think there were many power-looms in operation in 1816?—I should think not so many.

3157. Nothing that could have reduced the price of the hand-loom weaving?—I cannot speak to it; 1816 was the time that business fluctuated very much, both as it regarded the demand and prices.

3158. But what I wish to draw your attention to, is the time of the introduction of the power-loom?—I cannot speak to the time myself.

3159. Have you any reason to think otherwise than in 1816 there were more power-looms in motion that could at all have influenced the fall in wages?—I do not know; I cannot speak to it.

3160. Do you recollect when you first heard of the power-loom at all?—It is five or six years since they began speaking so much about power interfering.

3161. You living at Bolton, will well remember the destruction by fire of the power-loom establishment at West Horton?—Yes, that was about 1812.

3162. Do you know that there were very few power-looms in operation at that time?—There were not so many.

3163. In 1812 I find the price of weaving six-quarter cambric was 14*s.*?—In 1812; yes, that was the time that I was making (which makes me recollect that circumstance) that I was making so many of those blue shawls. Then a weaver would have earned two guineas a week with ease.

3164. In 1811 the price was 14*s.*?—Yes.

3165. In 1813 the price was 15*s.*?—Yes.

3166. For three years together, without the power-looms having interfered at all, the weaving of cloth had fallen from 30*s.*, which it was at, in your experience?—Yes, you see at that time there was very trifling produced, it was just in its infancy in fact.

3167. Then do not you think there must have been some other cause besides power-looms?—There have been other causes, no doubt; but I think if you intend to legislate, that is my firm opinion, that you cannot interfere with the hand, except you interfere with power also, that is my firm opinion.

3168. You have stated, as your opinion, that the low price of wages has been brought about by over production?—Yes.

3169. You think the production must be lessened before the prices can be raised?—Yes, that is my opinion.

3170. Would reducing the time of labour in mills, and raising the wages of the hand-

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hand-loom weavers, tend to diminish the production?—There is no doubt it would lessen the production, but how it would operate upon the market generally, or whether the hand-loom weavers would find employment or not, I do not know. I cannot speak to that exactly.

3171. You have stated the export of twist to be one of the causes too?—Yes.

3172. If the time of labour was reduced in mills, would not there be less twist to export also?—No doubt there would.

3173. Would that have any effect in preventing the foreigners from competing with you in the manner they do, who are now supplied with twist from this country?—No doubt. In some countries perhaps they would take more of our manufactures. Now, Russia, I have been shipping to St. Petersburgh for several years, and when I began there, it was in fancy goods entirely, and about 18 months ago (I have done business with two houses there,) there was one house sent me a lot of patterns over; the letter was open at one end, and they said, send no more fancy patterns of such a description, for we are manufacturing them here, and therefore it is of no use your attempting to send that article, because you cannot compete with us. The duties there, you know, are very heavy. And this is fancy tape check. I have the patterns at my warehouse, somewhere or other; it is laid on one side. That was sent from a Mr. Jenkyns, who used to buy a deal in Manchester.

3174. Must not the attempt to compete with foreigners successfully be given up by manufacturers in this country, if they pursue the manufacture in the way they are doing?—Why, I do not know whether they will attempt to give up or not, but, however, I think it will be a difficult matter to manufacture goods to compete with those countries where yarns are sent free of duties.

3175. In the instance you have named, you say your agent desired you to send no more goods, because they themselves could make them cheaper?—Yes, while they are furnished with yarn to manufacture that article with from this country.

3176. Then the best way of checking that manufacture for a time would be to lessen the exportation of yarn?—Or else lay a duty upon it. That is my opinion of it.

3177. You have stated that the difficulty of obtaining a profit in the home market, has induced you to commence the exportation of your own goods?—Yes, I have.

3178. Has the increase in the quantity caused by the power-loom, and by the low price paid for weaving, placed the consumers in this country in a state that they cannot purchase goods to the extent they did themselves formerly?—I do not think that this is altogether the cause; goods are very low; they may dress at a very low rate now; but it is a point that I have not thought much about.

3179. But if the weavers received more, I think you have already stated, they would be able to consume more?—Yes, if they could receive more, no doubt they would; if those employed in factories received more, they would be able to consume more, no doubt of that.

3180. And if those employed in agriculture received better wages, they would be able to consume more?—Yes, they would so.

3181. So that, through the medium of better wages, an extended increase of consumption might take place?—Yes, there is no doubt of that at all. I think the country at large would feel the benefit of it too, if it could be done.

3182. Is it your opinion, then, that if better wages could be obtained for those who labour, that that would be a better course than trying to fight against this foreign competition?—There is no doubt it would be better if you could manage it; I think so myself; but we are obliged to fight against competition, because I do not think all could be consumed here that is manufactured here; nothing like it.

3183. Why not?—I do not think it could, the production is so great.

3184. How would your foreign trade go on, in case this plan was to be adopted for regulating wages here to our immediate benefit?—In some instances I should wait a time, before I should again advance in some of the foreign markets.

3185. You would be prevented shipping?—No; perhaps in time it would come round; but it is the case at present in all the foreign markets, that where an article has once been done, it is a difficult matter to get an advance upon that said article, in what you call current goods, staple articles; it is a very difficult matter.

3186. Now, you have stated the wages of those employed on power-looms to be 8 *s.* a week?—Some of them will obtain more. I am stating this as the price some

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some of them are paying; they will weave so many pieces a week; some perhaps obtain more; I dare say there are some get more than that.

3187. So that with this improved machinery, weavers have to go on working for 8 *s.* or 10 *s.* a week, when formerly, in your experience, he would at his own house have got 20 *s.* or 30 *s.* a week?—Yes. I have known the time when they could have got it in their own houses.

3188. Then this machinery has not benefited the workpeople?—It does not benefit the workpeople: no, it does not.

3189. The wages which you have stated the weaver gets at the hand-loom are 6 *s.* a week; are there many deductions to make from it, which are indispensable?—Yes, there are a number of deductions; such as warehouse rent, and what they call the sowing, what they dress with, and many incidental matters connected with it, which they generally reckon about 3 *d.* in 1 *s.*; that is what they calculate upon.

3190. Then taking the 3 *d.* from the 1 *s.* that would leave for the weaver 4 *s.* 6 *d.* net?—Yes; that is the system that journeymen work upon. But there are very few journeymen weavers now; very few.

3191. Have you taken pains to ascertain the number of weavers in Bolton; I think you stated them at 7,000?—Yes.

3192. You believe that is an accurate statement?—I believe it is something near it; this was mentioned at our meeting; I wanted to know what number, and I said I thought it would be rather more than what there was; but however, when they entered into some particulars, I thought it was about correct.

3193. How many do you think might be dependent on that 7,000 for subsistence?—Why I do not know exactly; there are, perhaps, three or four or five in a family, children; there is the head, and then the children that weave in the same family.

3194. You have stated that you never was the first to commence a reduction of wages?—Yes.

3195. You always condemned it?—I always was opposed to the system, always; and I dare say I can be borne out in what I say.

3196. And the many attempts that have been made by you and others to prevent these reductions have failed?—They have.

3197. Do you think it then desirable that some measure should be carried by Parliament, if it is practicable, that would throw the power of regulating these wages upon such as yourself, and those who are opposed to it?—I should have no objection at all, if a plan could be fixed; something simple; I should have no objection I am sure; I should be very happy to see the condition of the weavers improved.

3198. I understand that you are of opinion it would be desirable to lay a considerable export duty on the export of the yarn; did I understand you right?—Yes. I think it would have a tendency to protect our manufacture. That is my opinion of it.

3199. Do you know whether there are any other countries in the world besides Great Britain that spin cotton?—Yes, I suppose there are some others; they spin cotton in Egypt, I believe; but I am not acquainted with all the different places.

3200. Do you know whether cotton is spun in France to a great extent?—Yes, I believe it is.

3201. Do you know whether it is in the Netherlands?—I believe it is there spun also.

3202. Do you know that in the United States of America it is spun to a great extent?—Yes, for their poor it is.

3203. Then if we were to lay a great export duty on cotton yarns, how should we compete with the Americans and French, the people of the Netherlands, and the people of Egypt as to price?—What, with regard to the price of yarn?

3204. Yes; if there was a great export duty on yarn, how should we compete in the foreign market with the French, the people of the Netherlands, the Americans and the people of Egypt, who are all cotton spinners, from your statement?—I do not think they spin to any great extent at any of these places. It would in time, perhaps, encourage them to erect factories; I will allow that; it might in time, and I believe they are going on with it; it is for erecting factories, from what I learn, that so much machinery is going abroad; the founders never

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were so busy I suppose as they are at the present day, and they are enlarging all the foundries.

3205. Do you know that all machine-makers are now at liberty to go abroad; that there is no Government interference to prevent them?—Yes, and machines too; it is a great pity that they were allowed I think myself.

3206. But as all these foreigners that we are alluding to are cotton spinners to a great extent, do you not think, if we were to lay a duty on the export of yarn, that we should fail to compete successfully with them in foreign markets in the sale of yarn?—It might have that effect in some measure.

3207. Now, if the export of yarn was prohibited, we should of course not require so large an import of cotton wool?—No, perhaps not.

3208. Of course we should receive from America and from the Brazils much less than we now receive?—Yes.

3209. And in that case should not we just cut off to an equal amount the export of British manufactures to the Brazils and to the United States of America?—I should think not; not to the Brazils.

3210. But do you not think that all the cotton we import from Brazil and from the United States of America is paid for in British manufacture?—No, it is not all.

3211. What else is it paid by?—It is not in British manufacture; there are many bills remitted from there; it is not all.

3212. No; but do we not pay the United States of America and the Brazils in British manufactures for the cotton that we receive from those countries?—No, I think not. It is a subject that I cannot give a decided opinion upon, at all events.

3213. You say that bills are remitted from foreign countries?—Yes.

3214. But those bills go to the manufacturers who have exported goods, do they not?—Yes.

3215. Well, then, the bill is merely a transfer?—I was taking another view of it; I thought you meant in something like an exchange of the article of manufacture for the produce there.

3216. Do you not think it comes to that?—Well, it may come to that after all.

3217. That American who draws a bill on the honourable Member for Oldham for a quantity of cotton, has that bill sold in the market, and it would very likely come to my honourable friend the Member for Birmingham; is not that the operation of the bill?—Yes, it is certainly; you are right.

3218. Do you find that in exporting goods to foreign countries you are competed with by any other manufacturer?—Yes, I have had complaints for mine going out, perhaps if I send at rather a higher price than others; I will allow that. And I have had samples sent me already in light goods, such as I have been speaking of, that is, produced by power, which I cannot compete with.

3219. Then do you not think if any restriction was put upon the employment of power-looms you would find it still more difficult to compete with foreigners?—No, I should think not, if there was less produced, because the foreigner, if there was less produced, would get bare of goods.

3220. But do not foreigners manufacture themselves?—Not that description of goods I am speaking of; there are very few goods of that description of light fabrics of muslins manufactured abroad. They manufacture now at Mexico what we call domestics, coarse calicoes and articles of that sort; that is a place that I have been doing a considerable business to in my fancy goods.

3221. Are there not America goods going to Mexico, called domestics?—They are prohibited, in a great measure, on account of the heavy duties, and that was done with a view to encourage and employ the population in manufactures. Our yarn goes there; there is a very considerable demand now for yarn in the Mexican market; and the manufactured piece of goods pays 80 or 90 per cent., and they only pay 40 per cent. on the yarn duty.

3222. There are no power-looms in Mexico?—No, there is no power; all hand.

3223. If a tax on the export of cotton yarn should occasion a diminution of export of British manufacture in payment for raw cotton, would not such tax occasion a corresponding increase of other British manufactures to be exported to those countries which now buy cotton yarn?—Yes, I should think there would be an increased demand.

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3224. You think there would be an increased demand for British manufactures to those countries which now purchase cotton yarn?—Yes, I think so.

3225. That is to say, it would tend to increase the export of manufactures on one side if it checked it on the other?—Yes.

3226. You have said that you have had complaints made to you of your goods going out at higher prices than others?—Yes.

3227. Who do you mean by others?—By houses that have shipped the same article. I do not know where they came from, but houses that have shipped the article. I do not know who has been the manufacturer; but it is not above a fortnight since I had no less than five patterns sent from St. Petersburgh of these light cambrics, and when I came to examine the reeds, they were similar to what I was making, and I could not compete with them.

3228. Had you reason to believe that the goods were made in England?—Yes; and I believe they are made on the system I have told you, by power, the greatest part of them. The hand-loom cannot compete with the power, that is my opinion, in anything that it can manufacture.

3229. Then the competition you meet with in foreign markets is from those who produced the goods in this country as well as yourself?—To be sure.

3230. And does that competition still in your mind arise from over-production, as you before stated?—Yes, I have no doubt it is over-production.

3231. Then to lessen the production would be to do away with this foreign competition which you complain of?—But how can you do away with it?

3232. What, lessening the production?—Yes, lessening the production perhaps, or putting me upon the same footing.

3233. You have stated something about duties lately imposed in the German states?—Yes.

3234. Do you know what those duties are?—I do not; I have not seen a scale of them; but it was a circumstance that was mentioned to me, that on some articles it is as much as 1 *s.* 6 *d.* a pound.

3235. And the imposition of these duties has led to a less demand for goods from this country?—Yes; I have heard different, both printers and manufacturers, state the same, and I have inquired of some Germans that used to purchase goods of me, whether it is the case with them, and they said within the last fortnight that it interferes very much with their business; they are not doing anything like the business they were before.

3236. Had this duty been imposed with a view to support the manufactures in those states?—No doubt.

3237. Then notwithstanding the goods were sent out at so low a rate from this country, still the foreign nations found it their interest to promote these manufactures?—Yes, to employ the population; I have no doubt of that.

3238. And do you think that any reduction that we could make in the price here would put a stop to these foreigners in continuing their manufactures?—I do not think it would, while they are supplied with the materials to manufacture, at all events. If you were to lay a heavy duty on the exportation of yarn, it would facilitate the spinning perhaps.

3239. Do you think then that we must find out some other means of relieving ourselves than that of looking to any extension of trade with foreigners?—I do not know what are the means, I am sure; I am not capable to speak on that head.

3240. Would the consumption at home do it?—Yes.

3241. If we were to sacrifice a great many of the productive interests of this country to the idea of extending our foreign market, and we were greatly to extend our foreign market; supposing all other countries were to impose restrictions in the same way that the German states have done, and prevent the importation of our goods after we had sacrificed everything in this country to a foreign trade, what do you think would be the condition of this country after the imposition of those duties in foreign states?—They are already imposing prohibitory duties; they are doing it all over the continent of Europe, and all over the world: there are duties on all our goods that go abroad.

3242. Do you think there is any reasonable expectation of materially increasing our foreign trade?—I cannot speak on that head exactly, whether there is any reasonable expectation of it or not. But I am aware of this, that these heavy duties that are levied upon manufacture upon all the continents we supply with

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yarn, is done with a view to encourage their own manufacture there; it is done with a view to employ the population.

3243. You have stated that we send out manufactures from this country in return for cotton wool; why do they require these manufactures from us in return for cotton wool?—They cannot do without our manufactures in some parts; the Brazils cannot.

3244. Do you think they would be better able to do without our manufactures if they did not send us the cotton wool?—They will send us the wool; there is no fear of that.

3245. But would not they still require our manufactures, whether they sent us the wool or not?—Yes.

3246. Then it would not cut off our market?—No, I do not think it would; because it is a description of cloth that they require for clothing.

3247. And they take it because they require it, and not because they send us cotton wool?—Not exactly on that account; there is a little cotton wool comes from the Brazils.

3248. Do you work in the fancy or the plain trade?—Both.

3249. Does the power-loom come into competition with the fancy trade?—Not so much.

3250. Do you find that your weavers are better or worse off in the fancy trade?—The fancy-good weavers are better off generally.

3251. Is it because they are better workmen?—No; we always give more liberal wages for an article that there is not so much competition in with other manufacturers: but the fancy trade is decreasing very much indeed, very much. About three years ago I was going to give it up entirely, and that is the reason why I turned my attention more to making cambrics and shirtings.

3252. Why is the fancy trade on the decline?—I cannot speak to it exactly.

3253. There is not the same taste for it?—There is not that demand for it, neither at home nor abroad, as there was. At St. Petersburgh they are manufacturing fancy goods for themselves, except it is some particular goods.

3254. Are the wages that you have been stating those of the fancy weavers?—No.

3255. What can fancy weavers earn?—I have fancy weavers that will earn 13*s.* or 14*s.* a week, and on some particular things they will earn still more than that.

3256. What proportion do those bear to the rest of the weavers?—There are very few of them; a mere nothing.

3257. Have you any other statement to make?—I do not know that I have, particularly.

3258. And no document that you think it of importance to put in?—No.

3259. Any statement of wages, or anything that you wish to put in?—No, I have no statement of wages.

3260. Do you think that an increase of the foreign trade would have any more beneficial effect on the country than a corresponding increase in the home market?—I think we require both.

3261. Supposing the wages of English manufacturers should rise to the amount of 10,000,000*l.* sterling, would not that affect the consumption of British commodities to the amount of 10,000,000*l.* sterling more, which would be an equivalent to the increase of the foreign market 10,000,000*l.* sterling?—No doubt it would. If anything of that sort could be accomplished, it would be a good thing for the country.

3262. The consumption at home, if it can be increased, is better than a consumption abroad?—Yes, very preferable, in my opinion.

3263. And therefore a reduction of wages is injurious?—Yes.

3264. Do you think that the reduction of wages has been occasioned by the superfluous production of British commodities?—Yes.

3265. Did not the reduction of wages commence before the over-production commenced?—Yes, in a degree.

3266. Do you think that the reduction of wages tends to increase the over-production by increasing the labour of the mechanics?—There is no doubt it has that tendency; they work still longer.

3267. Therefore you think the reduction of wages increases the evil out of which it arises?—It has a tendency to increase the production, which is the evil out of which it arises.

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3268. Then you would recommend some measures, if practicable, to raise the wages of labour, increase the consumption of commodities at home, and the comforts of the population?—If it is practicable, I think it a very desirable thing; that is my opinion of it.

3269. Have you ever turned your attention to the money question?—No, I have not.

3270. But you attribute the fall of price to the over-production of commodities?—Yes.

3271. You are aware that these low prices have been general in every article of consumption in England?—Yes.

3272. Having a general operation, you would probably be of opinion that there must be a general cause?—Yes.

3273. That over-production cannot act on all things?—No.

3274. Since the depression has been general, do you think it has been occasioned by any local or particular cause?—No, I do not think it has been occasioned by any local or particular cause; the only thing is the over-production.

3275. But do you think we have had over-production of all kinds of commodities of manufacture, and wheat and grain?—That is a question I am not capable of giving an answer to.

3276. Do you not think that in every 100 *l.* of production which we effectuate, we in that very operation consume 100 *l.* of other commodities suitable to the habits and the wants of the producers?—There is no doubt. It is a question I do not feel capable of answering.

3277. Has it ever occurred to you, that the over-production has arisen from under consumption?—They both have a tendency; if there is less consumption, then the production goes on.

3278. If there were to be such distress and depreciation in all the interests of the country generally, as to diminish the power of parties to consume, would not that have a tendency to create an appearance of over-production, whether that appearance was clear or not?—Yes, no doubt it would.

3279. Has it ever occurred to you to account for the over-production in that way?—No; it is a point that I never studied at all.

3280. The honourable Member has asked you some questions respecting general depreciation?—Yes.

3281. Do you consider the cotton trade in a state of depreciation?—I do, though it is very much upon the increase, still I believe an increase of distress goes along with it.

3282. Then you mean the Committee to understand that the great cotton trade of Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire, and the neighbourhood, is in a state of depreciation, and doing badly for the masters and the men?—I do not say it is doing altogether badly for masters.

3283. But it is in a state of great depreciation; define what you mean by that?—I mean this, that my ideas are connected principally with the weavers upon that head; that there is still distress among them, though we appear to be flourishing, and so on in our commerce.

3284. Do you consider that the cotton trade, taken as a whole, is in a state of depreciation?—I do not think it is; not those that are connected in some departments of the cotton trade.

3285. But generally speaking, are the profits as great as they used to be?—Generally speaking, among the hand-loom weavers it is in a state of depreciation, and very great. As it regards the hand-loom manufacturers, it is, as I said before, in a state of depreciation at the present time.

3286. Did you or did you not state, in another part of your evidence, that the hand-loom manufacturers were not receiving sufficient profits, and that neither were the power-loom manufacturers receiving sufficient profit, and that a power-loom manufacturer stated that to you?—Yes, it was a power-loom manufacturer that shipped his goods abroad, that was saying he could not obtain any additional advance upon his goods, although he was paying so much for the cotton he spins and manufactures.

3287. Did he not state at that time he was not making a profit; did you state that he did?—Yes, he said there was no profit to be obtained.

3288. Supposing a manufacturer in Lancashire to have embarked the sum of 50,000 *l.* in any kind of Lancashire manufacture, in the years 1823, 1824 and 1825, do you think it possible that any prudence, industry, economy and care used

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by such manufacturer, could now enable him to withdraw 50,000 *l.* from the same trade?—I should think it would be a difficult thing to withdraw so much capital.

3289. Then do you think that a prosperous state of trade, in which 10 years' labour and discretion have been thrown away?—There have been profits, no doubt; some have been in that time and some perhaps not.

3290. How many should you think have been unsuccessful to one that has been successful?—I cannot say; it is a subject that I could not enter into to give any general account, but I dare say you hear of some rising and some falling; it always was the case and always will be.

3291. Do you think there have been three falls to one rise?—Yes.

3292. You have stated, that there has been of late a decline in the demand for fancy goods?—There has.

3293. You have also stated, that fancy goods are made principally by hand-loom weavers?—They are.

3294. Has not the decline of demand been principally occasioned by the duty being taken off printed calicoes?—That has operated, no doubt, on account of the prints being produced at such low prices to what they were; that has a tendency, no doubt, to operate against the fancy goods.

3295. Do not you consider that printed calicoes have in a great measure superseded the consumption of fancy goods, and that they are now produced at a less rate than they could be produced?—Yes, they are; because the cloth is produced by power, and they can print by power too, so that you can produce the article at a very low rate. Now the gingham hand-manufacturers, they are all going out of the trade; R—— and R—— are giving up the trade entirely, since the duty was taken off prints; they were very extensive manufacturers, but they are giving the trade up, and they are going into power.

3296. And do you consider that the demand has fallen off, principally, more owing to the competition of prints than foreign countries competing with us in manufacturing that kind of goods for their own consumption?—Yes; I have no doubt of that.

3297. You have stated that there is not a general depreciation throughout the cotton trade of Lancashire; if there be not a depreciation, how does it happen that the power-loom weaver does not receive more than 8*s.* a week?—I cannot speak to that.

3298. Does not a weaver generally receive good wages when a good profit is made by his master; you have said a power-loom weaver only receives 8*s.* a week?—Some more; there are some that will receive as much as 13*s.*

3299. But confine yourself to those parties whom you stated to receive 8*s.* a week; why do not they receive better wages than 8*s.* a week?—Because they have no better wages paid them, that is the reason.

3300. But if the trade was in a prosperous state, would not a master be able to pay better wages than 8*s.* a week?—I cannot speak to that; it rests with the master whether he is content with less profits.

3301. Did you ever know wages fall while profits were increasing?—There has been a season, I dare say, when some people pay low wages when they are getting profits; sometimes, no doubt, that has been the case.

3302. You have stated that for the 60-reed cambric 6*s.* is paid?—Yes.

3303. For weaving by hand?—Yes.

3304. And for weaving by power 2*s.* is paid?—Yes.

3305. Now, are you aware that the weaving constitutes but a small part of the expense of the power-loom manufacturing?—Yes.

3306. In making one piece?—Yes, I am aware of that.

3307. Do you know what the other expenses are to the power-loom manufacturer, besides the 2*s.* they pay to the weaver?—I should think 1*s.* would cover all the additional expense.

3308. In wages?—Yes, in regard to expenses, 1*s.* I have not made any calculation of the expenses attending the hand-loom weaving; I should say I should add 6*d.* a piece for the expenses of producing a piece of 60-reed by the hand-loom, and I should say I should add 1*s.* a piece to that by power; still there is a great difference.

3309. But you are aware there is the dressing constitutes one item of expense?—Yes.

3310. There is the overlooking?—Yes, I allow all that.

3311. There

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3311. There is the interest of money invested in building and machinery?—I will allow that.

3312. And do you think that 1*s.* will cover the whole of those expenses?—I should think it would; I will leave you to make that calculation.

3313. Now, you have stated, that the hand-loom manufacturer cannot obtain a profit who pays this 6*s.* a week, such a profit as to induce him to pay higher wages?—No.

3314. And any power-loom weaver gets 8*s.* a week?—Yes.

3315. Now, if you go on the supposition that the power-loom manufacturer gets 3*s.* more than the hand-loom manufacturer, the power-loom weaver then could not make above 11*s.* a week by the same rule?—No; I believe it is reduced to a very low ebb, is the power-loom weaving. I will not say about the profit; I am not acquainted with the profit.

3316. Then does not that make out the general depreciation, which you have been asked whether it prevails or not?—Yes.

3317. You have been asked about the state of the cotton trade 10 years ago and at present; is it your opinion that the cotton trade, for the last 10 years, has been a profitable or an unprofitable trade?—Why, some individuals, as I said before, have perhaps been making money, and others not.

3318. Has there not been, in the last 10 years, a very great increase in the number of cotton-mills as well as power-loom establishments?—Yes.

3319. And a great number of old mills very much enlarged?—Yes.

3320. And is it not well known that a great number of spinners and power-loom weavers have become very wealthy?—Yes.

3321. Have they become wealthy in the last 10 years?—They are increased in wealth, there is no doubt; I do not know whether it will go on as it has done, because there are so many going into it. My opinion is, the power will be overdone; it will work its own destruction, if no check is put to it.

3322. Do you think it likely to come in competition with hand-loom labour in other articles, which are not now affected by it?—There are very few things but what can be manufactured by power; some low fancy things that I am making now can be produced by power.

3323. Have you not known a great number of failures of both hand-loom manufacturers, and spinners and power-loom manufacturers, within the last 10 years?—Yes, there have been a number.

3324. A considerable number?—Yes.

3325. Does it come within your recollection, that there was a considerable number in the years 1833 and 1834?—Yes, there were.

3326. Are you aware that many of those mills were built with borrowed capital?—I have no doubt many were; most of them now are built on borrowed capital.

3327. Therefore it is no indication, in your opinion, when you see a great increase of mills built, that they are built by capital acquired by manufacture?—No.

3328. Do you think it better or worse for mills to be built on borrowed capital?—Well, it gives facilities, does a borrowed capital, for persons that are inclined to enter into business can build a mill, and on that account I think it is worse for the trade in general.

3329. Is there any more crime in the borrowing capital than in the lending it?—I should think not.

3330. Does not a man borrow capital to build a mill, because he expects a greater return of interest than he pays to the person from whom he borrows the money?—A greater return of interest.

3331. If I borrow 10,000*l.* to invest in a mill, is it not because I expect to get from that mill a considerable greater interest than I am to pay to my friend of whom I borrow the money?—Yes.

3332. In building mills, of course you are aware that if a mill costs 10,000*l.* the party lending will not lend the 10,000*l.*?—No, he will not lend to the full extent.

3333. How much do you think he will lend towards the erection of a mill; will he lend one-half?—Yes, I should think he would lend one-half.

3334. Will he lend two-thirds?—What, for the building? yes, I should think he would, because there is the machinery; I dare say he would.

3335. Then you consider that the person must still find some capital of his own?—Yes.

3336. What has been the depreciation of price in the value of a mill, with its

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machinery, in the last 20 years?—I cannot speak to it, I am sure. It depends entirely on the state of business when an establishment of that sort is sold; it depends on the state of the trade.

3337. And you are aware the machinery changes every six or eight years?—Yes.

3338. Will a mill built seven years ago, with the very best machinery that now exists, will that sell for one-half the money that it cost seven years ago?—I do not know.

3339. You have been asked as to the state of the cotton trade; do you think the cotton trade better or worse now than it was before the year 1820, for the parties embarked in it?—I do not think it is as good now as it was before the year 1820.

3340. Have you found within your experience, or seen so many persons retire upon fortunes since 1820, as you did before that time?—There are very few that have retired by fortunes of late years.

3341. If a person was inclined to dispose of his concern now, has he an opportunity to dispose of it with advantage?—I cannot speak to that, I am sure. There are, I know, some mills that have been upon sale of late, and I know a person that is very intimately acquainted with a brother of mine, in the manufacturing by power, and he said he would not have anything to do with it: he is a manufacturer of fustians; but, however, I cannot speak on that head particularly.

3342. If there have been persons inclined to dispose of their concerns, what is the reason that people do not buy those concerns instead of building new mills?—Why, new mills are built perhaps upon a better principle than the old ones, for one thing; they are building now: there is, I know, a new mill building now; a person that is a manufacturer is going to join another person that has some spare capital, and he is going a manufacturing; I believe it is a Bolton house; they are going to erect a mill, and to erect it on a certain principle to hold large wheels, which is advantageous, because the larger the wheels are I suppose the cheaper it is spun.

3343. Then do you think new mills are built in the expectation that the new machinery will answer where the old kind has ceased to answer?—Yes, there is more advantage, no doubt; if I were to go into the spinning department, I should prefer building a mill to buying an old one.

3344. Are you aware there has been a great comparative increase in the export of cotton yarn since the year 1818?—Yes; I have not studied the thing, but I understand it is the case.

3345. Are you aware that the export of cotton yarn in 1818 was about 14,000,000 lbs.; and is now upwards of 80,000,000 lbs.?—I have heard something of that stated.

3346. If there be a great increase in that branch of the trade, would it not necessarily induce persons to build new mills, in order to carry on that trade?—Yes, there are a vast number of new mills now erecting, or intended to be erected this summer, I believe.

3347. But if the increase in the export of yarn has had a tendency to depress the weavers of the fabric, does it necessarily follow that the increase in mills and the increase in that trade has been a general advantage to the country; that it has had a tendency to depress the manufacturers?—It has had a tendency to depress the hand-loom manufactures, I think; I think so; that is my opinion of it; there is less demand.

3348. Has there been a comparative increase in weaving, whether by power or hand, compared with the increase in the export of yarn?—There has been a decrease in the hand-loom manufacture of late years.

3349. Has there been a comparative increase in the export of power-loom weaving, compared with the increase in yarn?—Yes, there has been an increase in that of the power-loom cloth; it is a description of cloth that you can send to every market in the known world, what the power-loom produces.

3350. Do you think there has been a corresponding increase in the export of the fabric woven by power with the export of the cotton yarn?—Yes, there has.

3351. They have proceeded to the same extent?—Yes, they have both gone on.

3352. Is it not difficult to retire from spinning and manufacturing by power, without incurring a very considerable loss?—I should think so.

3353. Have you known many who, to avoid such a loss, yet willing to retire, have pursued that business till they have got into the Gazette?—Yes, I believe there have been some cases of it; no doubt of that.

3354. Then it has come within your knowledge that men have pursued a losing business?—Yes; I have not denied that.

3355. And

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3355. And does not that losing business sometimes tend to increase the exertions on the part of the manufacturer, and reaction, and enlargement of mills, and the improvement of machinery, and so on, to increase the productions?—Yes, there are some perhaps that may act on that principle.

3356. Then you do not think that the increase of the produce is any proof of its being a healthy and beneficial trade?—No, not altogether.

3357. You have stated that you thought that persons who borrowed money for the erection of mills, did so because they expected to make more profit out of those mills than they paid interest for the money; have you not found many instances of persons miscalculating in that respect, and that instead of producing advantage to them, it has produced ruin and loss?—Yes, no doubt some have; injury has been received in it.

John Scott, called in; and further Examined.

John Scott.

3358. DO you wish to explain any part of the evidence you gave on a former occasion?—Yes, and also to make a few observations, if the Committee will receive it in evidence, on embezzlement. I had a particular direction to speak upon that, if any question were asked me, and as I believe it has been touched upon by the manufacturers, I should wish to say something on the point.

3359. Have you got any statement there?—No, no statement; I wish the Committee to ask me a question or two upon it.

3360. Are you aware of a system of embezzlement going on in cotton yarn in your district?—I am not much acquainted with the cotton trade, and therefore cannot speak positively to the cotton trade; but I am apt to think that it does not exist so much among the weavers as among other parties, and for this reason, the manufacturers count the weft which they deliver to the weavers, and when not by count it is by weight; consequently it will appear to the Committee that the weaver has not the chance of embezzling in the same degree with warehousemen, warpers and other individuals, who have free access to the materials without any restraint being imposed upon them.

3361. Then are those the parties to whom you attribute the embezzlement, and not the weavers?—Mainly to them and not to the weavers. I knew a man, a neighbour of mine, who was transported for seven years for embezzlement; he was in a respectable house in Manchester; it appears that he had been carrying on that embezzlement for a number of years.

3362. And was he a warehouseman?—He was. That embezzlement is a practice most injurious as well to the weaver as to the honest manufacturer is evident, from its influence in lessening the value of honest-wrought goods; but until the manufacturers adopt more effectual means to prevent the practice among persons immediately employed in their warehouses, and who have free access to the material, I think it cruel and unjust to charge it on the weaver, who has his work weighed out to him with the most scrupulous exactness.

3363. Does any embezzlement take place in your own business?—I will not say that no embezzlement takes place; I do not mean to exonerate the weavers altogether; it may be the case in some few instances; but in the silk trade it cannot possibly exist to the extent which I have heard persons represent it, for the improved system that has been pursued by the manufacturers for this number of years utterly precludes the possibility of embezzlement to any material extent.

3364. By the weavers?—Yes, by the weavers.

3365. Do not you think that embezzlement may be carried on undetected more among the power-loom weavers than among the hand-loom weavers?—I should think so.

3366. They have not their weft weighed out to them in the same manner that the hand-loom weavers have?—I believe not.

3367. But as it is given to them to work up, they can take away a few cops perhaps unobserved, and by taking away a few daily, collect a quantity, which they will afterwards be able to dispose of?—I should think that possible.

3368. Were you instructed by the meeting which sent you here to make any particular statement with respect to embezzlement?—It was represented in last year's evidence, and also in this, that a deal of embezzlement had taken place, and the weavers directed me to state to the Committee their feelings upon the matter. These representations are calculated most powerfully to injure the character of the weaver. It may very often happen that silk is sent in damp from the dyer, and

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wound on the bobbins immediately; this perhaps is given to the weaver before it is dry, which, during the weaving of his piece, will lose its weight; his wages are stopped for the supposed loss, and he is considered a rogue. I have also known silk winders to lose the greatest part of their wages under similar circumstances.

3369. That is your reason for supposing it cannot exist in the silk trade?—A man can have no possible motive for retaining that by which he will lose more than if he returned it to its proper owner.

3370. Is there any further statement you wish to make?—As a great deal has been said about power, I have an observation to make upon the effect of the power-loom upon the price of the hand-loom weaver. I was looking over the evidence of last year, and I perceive, in a list of prices delivered in by Mr. Makin, of Bolton, that the wages dropped about 1 *s.* a year for 10 years up to 1816, previous to the time of the power-loom coming into operation; therefore I conclude that the power-loom could have no influence on the reduction of wages up to that period, and that after the power-loom came into more general operation the wages of the weavers dropped only 3 *d.* a year for a number of years, so that I am led to look for another cause besides or instead of the power.

3371. Have you come to any conclusion as to the cause, or did you state it in your evidence previously?—Yes; I can give no other cause than the immense competition that exists with the manufacturers themselves; and though there has been a great deal said about not being able to compete with the foreigners in their market, I think it is not so much the competition with the foreigners in their market as the competition of the home manufacturers in the foreign markets; and that I believe is the principal cause that has reduced the weaver's wages.

3372. That is your opinion of the cause?—Yes.

3373. If there be anything in your previous evidence to favour the establishment of a local board of trade in preference to a general board of trade, is the Committee to understand that to be your opinion?—I prefer the general to the local board, because it would establish uniformity of price throughout the country, and thereby prevent the possibility of one district underselling another.

3374. If there be anything in your previous evidence to favour the idea that local boards might assist the operation of a general board, is the Committee to understand that to be your opinion?—I think that unless the operation of those local committees would extend to the whole at one time, that it would destroy the principle upon which the general boards were established.

3375. But if the contingency which made the necessity for some alteration by a local board was something relating to the general demand, which would affect all places as well as the one, would not the local committees of all the different districts agree to come probably to the same result?—Yes; I think that if it were deemed necessary for local alterations to be made, that those alterations should extend to the whole at one time. With the permission of the Committee, I will deliver in an Appeal to the manufacturers of Manchester by the weavers on the subject of a board of trade in the latter part of the year 1826.

AN APPEAL to the Manufacturers and Merchants of *Manchester* and its Neighbourhood.

Gentlemen,

In the present alarming and unexampled crisis of our trade, when the working man is left without a hope to lean on, when hunger and nakedness have identified themselves with him, and he has no choice but to starve, or subsist upon the bounty of others, it has become the bounden duty of all, but especially of the unfortunate sufferer himself, to call the attention of the public to the most likely means for bettering his condition, to claim the cordial support of those who feel an interest in his well-being, and the forbearance, if not the friendly interference, of all.

It is a well known fact, that for the last 25 years the price of weaving has been gradually on the decline. Temporary causes will no doubt frequently occur to damp the spirit of our trade, and during their operation the weaver must submit to privations. This he would cheerfully do, if he knew that they were to last no longer than the cause that produced them. But this he knows is not the case. His sufferings are permanent and severe, and if they have originated in a temporary derangement of the market, they have been continued after the cause that produced them has been removed, and until a new cause for further reduction has arisen. And now, at this moment, all the miseries that the fluctuations of trade, and the cupidity of individual manufacturers have been able to accumulate for the last 25 years, are pressing upon the weaver with a force that it is no longer possible for human endurance to struggle with.

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Under this view of the case, and it is no exaggerated one, a change of measures is imperatively called for, and the only change from which we can derive the smallest hope of benefit, consists in a legislative enactment for the protection of wages; a measure which, as it would be beneficial to all parties, it would be the interest of all parties to pray for. We do not mean by this that wages should be fixed immoveably to any one point, but that a minimum rate should be agreed upon by a board of trade, the majority of which to consist of manufacturers, and the remainder of the representatives of the operatives; that this board shall meet at stated times for the purpose of adjusting the rate of wages to the state of the market, and that it shall not be lawful for any manufacturer to pay below this rate.

The utility of such an enactment, as it would have the effect at once of benefiting the manufacturer and ameliorating the condition of the working man, must be obvious to all; and that it would produce both of these effects is highly probable, if not morally certain. Its practicability is also clearly demonstrable; and though the writers of this article waive the subject at present, it is for want of room only, and they pledge themselves to substantiate their assertion if it be called in question. To return then to its usefulness: it would give stability to the property of the manufacturer and merchant, as far as regards the price of weaving, which under the present irregular system (if that is not a solecism in language), can never be the case. We appeal to yourselves, gentlemen, if it has not often happened, that during a dull season, when, rather than turn your men adrift, and suffer your machinery to spoil with rust and dirt, you have chosen the more humane alternative of partly keeping your men and machinery agoing, in the hope of disposing of your goods when a more favourable season should arrive; we appeal to yourselves if it has not often happened, that before the arrival of such season, but not until you had accumulated a very considerable stock, somebody, no matter from what motive, whether through a fear of loss, or an unfair thirst for gain, has, unknown to you, reduced the price of weaving, that is, in other words, has reduced the value of your stock. Under the provisions of a Protection Wages Bill, this could never be the case. Nor is it the manufacturer alone that is open to inroads upon his stock, through such unfair and dastardly means. The merchant is equally exposed, and equally defenceless. Nay, the very purchaser of a single coat is not sure but what he has this week paid 40*s.* for, he may be able, before the next, to purchase for 30*s.*: under the provisions of a Protection Wages Bill this could never be the case.

The utility of such a measure is farther evident, if we consider the effect it would have on the home market. It is really painful to see with what avidity manufacturers hunt after a foreign connexion, whilst at the same time they prevent the consumption of goods at home by disqualifying their workmen from becoming purchasers. We believe the majority of manufacturers are adverse to this; we believe they wish to see their workmen able to purchase the necessaries of life, instead of being obliged to beg them. But amongst so large a body of men, many bad ones will certainly be found. And will fair profits satisfy them? No. And what means of realizing an unfair profit are so simple, so easily attained, as a quiet, cunning reduction of the weaver's wages? What though his brother manufacturers are ruined by the step? his object is gained, and it is no matter. What though his weavers are starved and driven from the market? his object is gained, it is no matter. What though the cottage owner, to whom the weaver was formerly able to pay rent, must now be contented to want it; though his grocer, baker, butcher, &c. with whom he used to circulate his money, must either part with their goods "without money and without price," or keep them; though the builder, farmer, grazier, &c. with whom these have dealt, all suffer from the currency thus being withdrawn from circulation; though the revenue itself is injured, and the very nerves and sinews of the state are crippled; his object, his selfish, detestable object is gained, and it is no matter. Now, ought this state of things to continue? Whilst the wholesome regulations of the quarantine exist, to prevent the visitations of a foreign plague, should this domestic pestilence be permitted to stalk abroad, and scatter desolation and death through the land? Surely no; yet what remedy presents itself? None. Whilst things remain as they are, the better disposed part of the manufacturers have no more control over this pest of trade and of his country than if he resided in the moon. He can ruin his brother manufacturers, starve the workman, spread distress throughout all the ramifications of society, until at last it smites the revenue itself, and all with impunity: but under the provisions of a Protection Wages Bill this could never be the case.

Without waiting to show the ruinous tendency of supplying a foreign market with goods, the labour on which has been in part only paid by the manufacturer, and the other part by the country, whether directly in the shape of poor rates, or indirectly by casual acts of charity, makes no difference; without attempting to show, for it is already well known, that we thereby impoverish ourselves to enrich others, by giving, without receiving a due equivalent; we would beg to call your attention to the good that might be done at home. Here and in our colonies, where foreigners have no access, is a wide though neglected field for the application of capital. Here are millions who would be your customers, if they could, and who would not give a preference to foreigners, because they could not. Into this vacuum (and the absence of all comfortable clothing may well entitle us to call it so) you might discharge your surplus stock to-morrow, and receive a fair equivalent, if the rate of wages would permit the working man to become a purchaser. And what prevents the rate of wages from permitting him to become so? Why the unchecked power of reducing wages being possessed by individuals, who are ever ready to take advantage of it in order to take the lead in the market for cheap goods. Thus a race (competition it is called) in the road to ruin has commenced, and though the workmen have arrived first at the goal, the manufacturers, nay the trade itself, will assuredly follow. For it is not foreign competition alone, gentlemen, that you have to contend with; no, nor with that of Scotland and Ireland, and

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all the different manufacturing towns of England; it is not with one nor all of these alone that you have to contend; you must strive amongst yourselves who shall be foremost in the race, and if one of you should outstrip your neighbour to-day, and achieve a sale on lower terms than he can sell at, may not he overtake you on the morrow, and perhaps pass you on the road. Thus, gentlemen, a mutual loss to yourselves is effected, and the comforts of your miserable workmen sacrificed for the bare chance of gain, whilst the measure for which we solicit your support would secure a steady profit to you, and might eventually be the dawning of a bright and happy day to them.

Before closing, permit us to assure you, gentlemen, that we are far from even wishing to infringe upon your profits. If we thought that the measure we recommend would injure you in any respect, we would be the last to propose it. We know well that trade cannot be carried on without capital in somebody's hands; and will not be long carried on unless that capital is productive. We are aware also that whether it is or is not possible for the manufacturer to prosper without the weaver thriving at the same time, it is quite impossible for the weaver to thrive unless the manufacturer is prosperous. It cannot be, then, that we would knowingly propose any measure that would have the effect of impeding his prosperity.

And now, gentlemen, we leave the matter with yourselves, in the assured hope that you will not suffer it to fall to the ground. What we would advise, if we might presume to give our opinion, is, that the manufacturers in Manchester would meet in the Town-hall, or some other suitable place, on or before the 29th of January 1827 to discuss the subject, and resolve upon what steps it might be necessary to take before the Parliament assembles; and we would earnestly entreat the manufacturers of the neighbouring towns to adopt the same plan, and at the same time. Your voice, gentlemen, has often been raised at the call of distress; suffering humanity has often had reason to bless your liberality and exertions; and we trust that it shall never be said that you were then only callous when appealed to on behalf of

YOUR WEAVERS.

Martis, 14° *die Aprilis*, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Edward Baines, Esq. a Member of the Committee; Examined.

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3376. YOU state that the documents you have received from Leeds, purporting to come from the masters and hand-loom weavers of that place, you have every reason to believe authentic?—They are from persons who are engaged in the woollen stuff trade. Yes.

3377. Do you know the signatures attached to them?—I do.

3378. Have you every reason to believe those parties represent the real state of Leeds?—Yes.

3379. You believe that which appears to be stated by the weavers is coincided in by the masters, and that by the masters is coincided in by the weavers?—I believe in the first letter it is so; in the second of those letters I am not quite sure that the masters do coincide in their opinions.

3380. Do you think that the opinions generally given are the opinions of the weavers or manufacturers?—I believe in the first letter they are the opinions of both; in the second I should limit it to the opinions of the weavers.

3381. In giving in this statement you do not wish to compromise any opinion of your own?—No, certainly not.

[*The Documents were handed in.*]

To Edward Baines, Esq. M.P.

Sir, Leeds, 8 April 1835.

WITH the greatest diligence and care we have procured the information you required, and which is so necessary to our cause. We have waited on the different masters in the stuff trade of Leeds, and they have, to the best of their knowledge, furnished us with the following information respecting the number of weavers in their several employments, likewise with correct statements of the time their weavers are in full work, and the time they are partially employed, and how long without work; and also with their average weekly earnings, men, women, boys and girls, when in full work, which we carefully transmit to you for perusal, humbly hoping you will give it your support in the Committee which you are a member of. Sir, it gives general satisfaction to the masters and men in our trade to see so judicious a selection made from the House of Commons to inquire into so important a business, particularly the man who is so well acquainted with our local situation and trade. We fully rely on your integrity, wisdom and long experience, to represent our interests in this undertaking, which an impartial observer would think it is

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nearly time something should be done to ameliorate the condition of so useful a class of society, who bear their poverty with laudable meekness. Sir, the different statements of the masters are as follows:

Messrs. James Green & Eli Whiteley employ 412 weavers, whose average weekly earnings are as follows:

Gross earnings for men,	13*s.* 0*d.*;	for women,	7*s.* 0*d.*;	for boys,	8*s.* 9*d.*;	for girls,	7*s.* 0*d.*	
Real earnings	—	11*s.* 3*d.*	—	5*s.* 9*d.*	—	7*s.* 3*d.*	—	5*s.* 9*d.*
Full employment	—	10 months	—	8 months	—	8 months	—	8 months.
Partial employment		2 months	—	4 months	—	4 months	—	4 months.

Messrs. Joseph & James Craddock employ 106 weavers, whose average weekly earnings are as follows:

Gross earnings for men,	10*s.* 0*d.*;	for women,	6*s.* 0*d.*;	for boys,	6*s.* 0*d.*		
Real earnings	—	8*s.* 6*d.*	—	5*s.* 0*d.*	—	5*s.* 0*d.*	
Full employment	—	6 months	—	6 months	—	6 months.	
Without employment		6 months	—	6 months	—	6 months.	

Messrs. Darcy & Ryder employ 80 weavers, whose average weekly earnings are as follows:

Gross earnings for men,	10*s.* 0*d.*;	for women,	6*s.* 0*d.*;	for boys,	6*s.* 0*d.*		
Real earnings	—	8*s.* 6*d.*	—	5*s.* 0*d.*	—	5*s.* 0*d.*	
Full employment	—	6 months	—	6 months	—	6 months.	
Without work	—	6 months	—	6 months	—	6 months.	

Messrs. Parkins, Gaggan, Dunn & Goss employ 59 weavers, whose average weekly earnings are as follows:

Gross earnings for men,	10*s.* 0*d.*;	for women,	6*s.* 0*d.*;	for boys,	6*s.* 0*d.*;	for girls,	5*s.* 0*d.*	
Real earnings	—	8*s.* 6*d.*	—	5*s.* 0*d.*	—	5*s.* 0*d.*	—	4*s.* 2*d.*
Full employment	—	6 months	—	6 months	—	6 months	—	6 months.
Without employment		6 months	—	6 months	—	6 months	—	6 months.

Total number of weavers in employ, men, women, boys and girls -	- 657
Total number of weavers out of employ, men, women, boys and girls -	- 105
Total number of weavers in Leeds - - -	- 762

The reduction in wages paid for stuff weaving within the last five or six years is variously stated by the masters; some say one-sixth, some one-fourth, others one-third; on the whole, we think one-fifth to be the average, which is 20 per cent. lower than it was at the period above mentioned.

In the foregoing statement will be seen that there are in Leeds 762 stuff weavers, 412 of whom are in the employment of Messrs. James Green & Eli Whiteley, whose average weekly earnings, clear of all deductions, for men, amounts to 11*s.* 3*d.* when in full employment; and according to the said masters' account, their weavers are in full work 10 or 11 months in the year, which is, at the rate of five days per week, at 1*s.* 10½*d.* per day, throughout the year.

In the next class there are 106 weavers in Messrs. Joseph & James Craddock's employment, who are in full work six months in the year, and whose average weekly earnings for that time, free from all deductions, is 8*s.* 6*d.*; the other six months they have nothing to do at their trade, which makes their case deplorable in the extreme, some with very large families.

In the third class of weavers there is in the employ of Messrs. Parkins, Gaggan, Ryder, Darcy, Goss & Dunn, 139, nearly in the same condition as the latter.

The next and last class, the most deplorable of all, is 105 weavers, who have no employment. Those weavers, or the greatest part of them have been in the employment of Mr. Ryder and others, but in consequence of the decline in the stuff trade in Leeds, these men, some with helpless families, are in a state of starvation.

Mr. Charles Parkins, in his report to us, says, "We are satisfied that the rate of wages paid for stuff weaving is scarcely sufficient for bare existence, let alone that decency which ought to accompany a Christian; and if that can be said of men in full employment, what is to be said of weavers without any work? Can our legislators do nothing for them? We hope they can.

Three or four years ago, when the duty on Baltic timber was discussed in the House of Commons, with a view of reducing the same, it was there declared, that if the duty was taken off, several thousands of the inhabitants of Canada would be left entirely destitute, consequently the timber duty is kept on more for the Canadians' relief than as a source of revenue to the state.

Can no relief be afforded to 800,000 hand-loom weavers? Surely there can.

Five years ago we petitioned the House of Commons for a tax on power-looms; our opinion at that time was, that if the duty then paid on printed goods was taken off, which amounted at that time to half a million pounds sterling, and a duty of as much value laid on power-looms, it would be the means of throwing more work into the possession of the hand-loom weavers, and by so doing would give them the means of maintaining themselves

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and families without encumbering the parish, and the goods would be no dearer to the consumer by so doing. And if the taxes were now taken off soap, oil, wool, cotton, dye-wares, and all other raw materials used in the manufactures, and laid on power-looms, it would have the same effect.

It is the duty of the legislature to protect the weak from being oppressed by the strong; we are the weak, but the power-loom is strong; it takes from us our labour, but it does not contribute its share towards relieving the poverty it creates. It ought to be made more available to local rates, but it unfortunately happens that the persons who have the power to lay the taxes are mostly interested in machinery, and, either through custom or interest, consider nothing but the value of the buildings.

Those opposed to taxing machinery, say, if you tax it, it will stop all further improvement, and it will stop machinery; there would be equally as much reason in saying, if bricks be taxed there would be no more brick houses built; or if candles be taxed, that there would be none used, but we should sit in the dark. Again, it is argued, if you tax machinery it will destroy our foreign trade. That was done by the corn laws; in the year 1816, before power-looms became so numerous, there was exported from this country to foreign parts woollen goods to the value of 5,586,364 *l.* 9 *s.* 9 *d.*, and in six years after the passing of the corn laws, which was in the year 1821, the value of British woollens exported to foreign parts was reduced to 4,363,980 *l.* 15 *s.* 3 *d.*, which is a decrease of 1,222,383 *l.* 14 *s.* 6 *d.* in the exports of British woollens alone.

In 1816 there was exported to the United States of America British woollens to the value of 2,241,510 *l.* 13 *s.* 11 *d.*, and in 10 years after our exports to the same place were only 1,220,834 *l.* 19 *s.* 5 *d.* If we had taken their corn in exchange for our goods, the reverse would be the consequence; and notwithstanding 20 years of profound peace, and all the machinery brought into play, our foreign trade has never regained in value what it was in the years 1816, 1817 and 1818.

We are of opinion that unless a tax be laid on power-looms of 25 per cent. of the wages we receive at present for the same description of work, we shall in a little time be compelled to work for the same wages they do. With our present wages, when in full employment, we can scarcely get the necessaries, let alone the comforts of domestic life. What will be our situation then? It cannot be contemplated without horror.

Mr. James Green says, in his report to us, that the hand-loom weavers think that their labour ought to be protected as well as the farmer's corn, by a tax on power-looms; we are of the same opinion.

We are, Sir, your most obedient humble servants,

Edward Sunderland.
Michael Mahony.

We, the undersigned, having examined the reports from which this document is collected do believe it to be a correct report of the situation of the stuff weavers of Leeds.

James Green.
Eli Whiteley.
Joseph Craddock.
Samuel Maud.

To Edward Baines, Esq. M.P.

Sir,

In addition to what we have said in our former letter to you, we beg leave further to observe (and we hope you will lay our observations before the Committee on Hand-loom Weavers), that it is the general opinion of both masters and men, that Mr. Fielden's plan, in its present shape, is not calculated to do us any good; for if the local boards should rate the wages to meet the wants of the hand-loom weavers, the power-looms would take all the work; and as to a weaver taking his master before a magistrate for refusing to comply with the award of the board, it is not practicable; it would only create jealousies and ill-will between masters and men, without being any advantage to either.

As an instance of that, we beg leave to mention that in the beginning of last February, Thomas Nail, a stuff weaver, laid information before the magistrates of this borough against his master, Thomas Darcy, for paying wages in truck, and Mr. Barr, the clerk of the court, said it was a clear case. The mayor said he feared that he could not enforce the law, for on a similar information being laid before them by another weaver, Darcy proved in that court that he was no householder, but he resided with his daughter, and that he had no property of his own; and although Darcy's truck is worth less by 30 per cent. than money wages paid by other masters, poor Nail was forced to submit, beside losing his work for attempting to put the law in force; and we fear a similar result will attend all attempts to put Mr. Fielden's law in force. If Mr. Fielden wished to grant real relief to the hand-loom weavers he would say to the Committee, there is 800,000 of them, and they are in the greatest distress, (and surely they are of as much consequence in the scale of society, and as well deserving of our notice as 800,000 slaves). Their foreign trade has been destroyed by the corn laws; their labour has been taken from them by the power-looms; their bread is taxed, their malt is taxed, their tea, their sugar, their soap, and almost every other article they use or consume is taxed, but the power-loom is not taxed. You must modify the corn laws,

laws, you must take off the taxes on wool, oil, cotton, flax, hemp, silk, soap, dye-wares and all other raw materials imported into this country, used in manufactures, and lay on a duty to counteract the Prussian tariff on all British wool and yarns exported from this country. You must appoint local boards to fix the minimum of wages to be paid for labour, and whatever rate of wages they may award as the price to be given for weaving, they shall have power to lay a tax on power-looms for the service of the state (on every piece woven by them) equal to one-fourth of such wages for every description of work woven by them. If Mr. Fielden can get a law passed as above stated, it would give real relief to the hand-loom weavers.

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When we petitioned the House of Commons in 1830 for a tax on power-looms, the working classes of Leeds were in great distress; the same paper (the Mercury) that reported the proceedings of the meeting at the Top-mill, said that there had been collected in the several places of worship in Leeds, and subscribed by individuals that week for the relief of the unemployed poor, 413 *l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*; and that the committee for the relief of the unemployed poor had that week voted relief to 2,200 individuals, whose whole income did not amount to more than 6 *d.* each to live upon for one whole week; and I assisted Samuel Maud, one of the visitors, the week before to hand relief in one division of the town to upwards of 200 families, consisting of upwards of 700 individuals, whose whole income from labour was no more than 2 *d.* each to live upon for one whole week, and that was the tenth week they had been relieved by the said committee. Yet, on the day our petition was presented to the House by Mr. T. Sadler, Mr. Herries rose in his place in the House, and said he had received letters from Messrs. B. Gott & Sons, and from Messrs. P. Nevins & Sons, which said that they had been very large manufacturers in Leeds upwards of 50 years, and that they never knew the labouring classes to be in better circumstances than they were in Leeds at that time. This was proof that those large manufacturers knew nothing of the real situation of the labouring poor in the very town where they had been so long residents.

Feeling confident you will truly represent our cause in the House of Commons, and before the Committee on Hand-loom Weavers at this time, we subscribe ourselves, in behalf of the stuff weavers of Leeds,

Your most humble and obedient servants,

Edward Sunderland,
Michael Mahony, } Stuff Weavers.

Edward Good, called in; and Examined.

Edward Good.

3382. WHERE do you reside?—At Coventry.

3383. Are you a weaver?—Yes.

3384. In what branch of the trade?—The engine branch of the trade.

3385. The silk trade?—Yes.

3386. How long have you been in that branch of the trade?—Twenty-four years.

3387. Have you been residing at Coventry all that time?—Yes, the whole of the time.

3388. How many weavers are there in that branch of the trade?—I cannot answer distinctly, but some thousands.

3389. Have you ever heard of an estimate having been made?—We have taken an estimate of the looms a time or two; the looms are 4,000 or 5,000.

3390. Are those looms in full work?—I should think generally now they are, with the exception of some few who make the wider widths.

3391. Can you describe the difference between the engine branch and the single hand?—They are both a species of hand-loom weaving; the engine loom has several shuttles, from eight to 40, and makes as many ribbons as shuttles; the higher the number of the looms the narrower the width of the ribbons; but the single-hand branch is a one-shuttle loom only, making with one shuttle one ribbon at a time.

3392. It is called a bar loom?—No; the engine weaver drives those shuttles by what is called a driver.

3393. Is it not called a bar loom?—No; it is distinct from the bar looms.

3394. Is the engine superior to the single-hand?—It is superior in this way, that it makes more ribbons; but the single-hand branch used to be confined exclusively to the fancy trade, and they can make ribbons on the single-hand that we cannot by the engine-loom.

3395. Which receive the higher rate of wages, the engine or the single-hand weavers?—We calculate that they have the highest rate of wages on the engine-loom.

3396. Is that a general practice?—No; it has been latterly, but it never used to be; all the lists and regulations made for prices, till within the last few years,

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give the greatest price to the single-hand; it was presumed they could make them the most perfect.

3397. Can you account for the change that has taken place?—Yes, easily I can account for it.

3398. The variation in the two kinds of wages?—Yes; we have been accustomed for many years, since 1816, to have a list of prices, and those lists have been altered and regulated at various times by joint consent, both of masters and men; and there has been a list both for the engine and the single-hand trade; but latterly, within the last 12 months, the single-hand list has been destroyed, and they are now without the protection of a list. So that while we in Coventry have a list maintaining our prices, they are without a list, and are left to any price they can get.

3399. The single-hand-loom weavers principally reside in the country?—Almost entirely; there are very few in Coventry.

3400. Is that the reason why they do not come in the Coventry list?—They are so scattered abroad that they cannot so well maintain a list.

3401. Have you had a combination in the town to resist the reduction of wages?—Yes.

3402. Do you think you have a better opportunity of resisting this reduction than those scattered about in the country?—Yes.

3403. Do you think that has operated against the single-hand branch who reside in the country?—Yes, no doubt it has.

3404. How did this list of prices begin in 1816?—The first list of which I have any knowledge was made in 1816; antecedent to that there was no particular list, but an understood scale of wages; the price was uniform for a great many years; when the trade was bad, we used to get out work as it was wanted in point of quantity, until about two years previous to the termination of the war, when we had an amazing high price of wages; but at the conclusion of the war they were reduced, and in 1816 a meeting was held by three deputies from the manufacturers and three from the weavers, and they fixed upon a list.

3405. Then it was a mutual agreement between the masters and weavers?—Yes.

3406. Did that remain uninterrupted for a considerable length of time?—No; in 1818, I think, there was an encroachment.

3407. From which party did the encroachment come?—The manufacturers.

3408. Did that put an end to the list of prices?—Yes; if my recollection serves me, it was considered lost or destroyed.

3409. Was that in both branches of the trade, or one?—Both, I should say.

3410. When did a new list of prices commence?—In 1819 another list was made; one encroachment had followed another; the weavers turned out in 1819, when the magistrates convened a meeting of manufacturers, hoping to end these dissensions. The manufacturers alone issued one in 1819.

3411. Was that satisfactory to the weavers?—Yes.

3412. How long did that continue?—Till 1822, when there was another turn-out, an attempt being made by two or three manufacturers to destroy that list. The turn-out lasted for three weeks.

3413. Did that end in a new list being made?—No, the weavers kept their prices.

3414. Both branches of the trade?—Yes, I judge so; I am more particularly acquainted with the engine trade.

3415. In what year did the single-hand branch cease to have a list?—Not more than 12 months since.

3416. Do you think your condition has been better than theirs since that time?—During the winter the trade has been amazingly bad; I think they may have had rather more employment, but our condition is certainly better than theirs, when we have work and they have work.

3417. Are you under any alarm that this list should be taken away as well as the single-hand?—We have no doubt the first time that there comes a slack in the demand for labour, an attempt will be made on it directly.

3418. Do you consider any legislative enactment would protect you?—There is but one opinion among the operatives, that is, that it would.

3419. What is the state of the hand-loom weavers' silk trade generally at Coventry?—The condition, generally speaking, is bad.

3420. What rate of wages are they making per week, the fair working weaver; the

the average amount of their earnings?—If you will allow me to refer to it, I would state, that in 1832 I gave evidence to this effect, that the average earnings of weavers in this branch of trade were from 10*s.* to 12*s.*, and I choose, if you please, to refer to that, because that was the joint opinion of four operatives that were here in London, and four or five manufacturers that were here in London also; but subsequent to that time we have sustained a reduction.

3421. What was the extent of that?—Seven and a half per cent.

3422. What do you conceive to be the average wages per week of a fair-working able-bodied weaver at the present time?—I think it does not exceed 10*s.*, not the average of the weavers; some may exceed it, others get less.

3423. What expenses come against that?—The weaver has to find his own machinery.

3424. Two shillings upon 10*s.* is 20 per cent.?—From 10 to 12.

3425. What expenses come against that?—The cost of the machinery, and the alterations and keeping in repair the machinery.

3426. And winding?—No; but we require extra rent: a weaver finds his machinery and works it at home, he therefore wants room for it.

3427. He has loom-rent to pay?—No; the loom is his own; if it is not his own, he pays for it to the manufacturers.

3428. Are there journeymen in your trade?—Yes, we are all journeymen.

3429. Suppose you had not your own looms, and had to pay another weaver who had a loom for the privilege of working it, what would you pay a week?—They pay 2*s.*; 1*s.* for the loom per week they would pay to the manufacturer, and 1*s.* for loom-standing.

3430. That is, 2*s.* would have to be deducted, in fact, out of your 10*s.*?—Yes, from the weaver.

3431. Do you work by candle-light?—Yes.

3432. What does your lighting come to per week?—We work by a candle, not by any other light.

3433. Your candles cost you something?—Yes, perhaps 6*d.*

3434. Then 2*s.* 6*d.* has to be deducted from 10*s.*, which leaves 7*s.* 6*d.* as the net?—Yes, that is to those who have no machinery.

3435. That may be supposed to be the fair interest they ought to receive for the capital they have laid out?—Yes.

3436. If you have a family, what would be the average earnings per week of a family, say a wife and one or two children, able to work, of 10 or 12, or 14 years old?—Some men's wives work in the looms at Coventry, and others work at winding; others at filling, and some at warping.

3437. Is that in the weavers' own houses?—Yes, the weaving and the winding in part, for we have the shoot given out to us in the hank, and if the man's wife winds, she would wind it at home.

3438. The wife winds for the husband?—Yes; it frequently happens the man's wife is a weaver.

3439. What can she earn per week?—In what capacity?

3440. In her average capacity, whether as weaver or a winder?—As a weaver I think she might earn 6*s.* a week; as a winder, or anything else, much less.

3441. The children, what would they earn per week?—It would depend on their age.

3442. From 10 to 14?—I suppose if they go out to work, children of that age, they commonly go out to work on the engines, they would earn from 2*s.* to 3*s.* a week, if they go out; but not so young as 10; from 12 to 14.

3443. At what age do the children begin to afford assistance to their parents in your branch of the trade?—They begin sometimes very young, as young as nine or ten; probably if a man has two or three looms for his house, he will set his child to fill for one; that would be 1*s.* 6*d.* per week; sometimes they are set to try to wind, but they would earn very little at that.

3444. Those are cases in which it is rather an advantageous circumstance a man having a wife and a child or two from 10 to 14?—Yes; and it would, in a great measure, depend on his enjoying those advantages, and his having the machinery at home.

3445. Have they not machinery in general at home?—Yes, all that have it; but if a man has to go out to work on another man's machine, and his wife too, then he would not have a chance of bringing his children up; for it would be fifty

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to one if he could get his children introduced in the same house as he and his wife were.

3446. Will you state what you consider to be the fair average earnings per week of a man and his family in Coventry?—That would depend on the number he had to work.

3447. But take the average, what do you conceive they are earning now; not the best, not the worst, but the average?—There are some, not having altogether to support a family, more than 8*s.* or 9*s.* a week; some are getting double that.

3448. Taking the wife's earnings in as well?—Yes, if a man happens to have machinery; sometimes a man may have two or three machines from a warehouse, though he pays a fair price; he has them under his roof, and then he can put his children to it; but if he has to go out to work, he has not the chance to put his children to it. If he sent a child out at nine, no one would have the trouble of the child; but he might keep at nine one in his own house; he would put up with the difficulties.

3449. You stated before that a fair-earning man could earn 10*s.*, and deducting the expenses, it would be 7*s.* 6*d.*; now, if his wife earned anything, she would probably bring that up beyond 8*s.* or 9*s.*, which you get to be the average earnings?—Yes, if the woman went out to earn as well as the man; but they must have some one at home to take care of the house.

3450. Against this 8*s.* or 9*s.* there are other expenses to come, such as rent?—Yes.

3451. What have you paid on an average per week for rent?—I keep a house with a shop to hold four looms; it runs from 9*l.* to 10*l.* per annum.

3452. That is not an average case; an average case would be that which has only one loom?—I should say there are very few houses built to hold a loom at all under 7*l.*, and all have poor-rates to pay.

3453. Do you suppose that the rent per week amounts to 3*s.* 6*d.*, with the expenses?—I should think not; in the cases where they go out to work, possibly they may live in a house at 2*s.* 6*s.* or 2*s.* 9*d.*

3454. But the average case we have taken is a house with one loom?—A house with one loom would be from 6*l.* to 7*l.* a year.

3455. With the expenses of rates they might probably come to 3*s.*?—A house of that description would be rated to the poor, perhaps 6*d.* a month; I have known it at 4*d.*, and at 1*s.* 6*d.* per month.

3456. What does your firing cost you?—I think coals are about 7*d.* the cwt.

3457. Per week?—A family would use from one cwt. to one cwt. and a half.

3458. Your coals would cost you 9*d.* or 10*d.* per week?—Yes, I think it would for a house of that description.

3459. The two expenses of rent and fuel will be about 3*s.* deduction from the 8*s.* or 9*s.*?—Full 3*s.*

3460. Then it comes to about 3*s.* 6*d.*; that will leave 5*s.* for your clothing and your food?—Yes.

3461. Have you anything to spare to educate your children?—Not in those cases.

3462. Is there sufficient left in the average of cases?—No. My own case is not a case of that description; yet if it was not for the advantage of the Lancasterian and other public schools, my children could not be educated.

3463. You are in a higher branch of trade?—Yes; I have got four machines, my own property, and have the advantage of one or two of those description of people about me.

3464. If it was not for the advantage of charity schools, you would not have an opportunity of sending your children to school?—No; because there is so much want of employment as well as low wages.

3465. Do you think the weavers generally are worse educated than they were 15 or 20 years ago?—In the mass they may not, because there are those facilities for education, what with Sabbath Schools, and the Lancasterian and National Schools.

3466. If the weavers had to depend on their own power to send children to school, the probability is, they would be worse?—Yes, a great deal.

3467. The 5*s.* being left to provide for clothes and food, at least to an average weaver, do you suppose that sufficient for that purpose?—No, clothes are almost out of the question with those sort of people, people that are forced to go out to work.

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3468. Is the weaver much worse clothed than he used to be?—Decidedly.

3469. Does it prevent them from attending divine service on a Sunday?—Unquestionably, in numberless instances.

3470. You have stated an average weaver obtains 8*s.* 6*d.* per week; does he get full employment at that rate of wages?—No.

3471. How many months do you think in the year, on the average, he is unemployed?—Some are less employed than others; our trade is so controlled by fashion, what is wanted at one time is not wanted at another.

3472. Have they employment six months in a year?—Yes.

3473. Have they nine?—I think they have.

3474. Have they 10?—I think the whole of the machines are not employed 10.

3475. Then they only obtain this 8*s.* a week for 10 months in the year, or less than 10 months in the year on the average, and two months they are without wages?—Yes, I should say full two months in the year.

3476. Are the weavers employed; have they been more employed the last two years than the two years previously?—I should think less.

3477. You think less than the two years previously?—Yes.

3478. What is the comparative state of trade now and when you first knew it?—It is more extensive than when I first knew it.

3479. Do you mean by extensive, that more persons are employed in it?—Yes, for I have known it many years, but the condition of the operatives is much worse.

3480. Twenty-four years ago, in 1810 and 1811, were they a great deal better off?—Yes.

3481. You had a high price in war?—During the latter part of the war we had very high prices.

3482. Could you then better afford to pay the high price of provisions than you can now the low price of provisions?—Yes, a weaver could do better; I recollect the time he could do better, and pay 5*s.* a stone for his flour, than he can now paying 1*s.* 6*d.*

3483. Does the power-loom come in competition with you?—It does partially.

3484. When did it first begin to come in competition with you?—The competition first began to be complained of about last year; how long it has been in operation I cannot say.

3485. When did your condition first begin to decline so much?—Our condition declined very much in 1824; it was the anticipation of foreign ribbons being imported, I think, that gave a blow to our trade in 1824.

3486. Had not your condition been declining before that?—No, not generally, not for any length of time; it is a trade always subject to fluctuation, because controlled by fashion, but those fluctuations were of short duration.

3487. To what do the weavers generally attribute the decline in their circumstances now?—To foreign competition a great deal, but they attribute the present state of low wages in part to the individual competition at home, a desire on the part of one manufacturer to undersell another, and forcing reductions that were not needed.

3488. Have they at all entered into the cause why this home competition is greater than it used to be?—No, I do not know they have entered into the cause; it has been long manifest; we have, in fact, felt the truth of it, that when there came a slack of work there is a reduction tried.

3489. Used it not always to be a disposition of one manufacturer to compete with another?—No, since I recollect, trade has been very bad, but they did not attempt to reduce the wages; the master to whom I was apprenticed had nine looms or machines; I have known him to have but two going, yet he had just the same rate of wages for what he had to make in the two. The manufacturers used in bad times to give out the work in quantities, according to the demand, but the prices remained steady; the system of reduction did not take place till within the last 15 or 20 years.

3490. Do you think the manufacturers are making as good profits as they used to do?—I should think they are not making such good profits.

3491. You said the master with whom you were engaged had nine looms, and sometimes only employed two; what became of the seven weavers who were thrown out of work?—I do not know; some of them were apprentices; then he had to provide for them; that is the system at Coventry; they take them to bed and board; that is the only system many act upon.

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3492. The apprenticeship system?—Yes; there is a half apprenticeship.

3493. Did you never know an instance in your earlier recollection in which when a weaver was thrown out of work he himself offered to work at lower wages for his support?—No, I did not know an instance.

3494. The custom in those days was to shorten the hours, rather than to reduce their wages?—Yes, shorten the length; they would give them half work.

3495. Do you think that would be a better system, if it was re-established?—A great deal better for the weavers.

3496. Do you think it would be any disadvantage to the manufacturer?—I think not the slightest.

3497. You have spoken of foreign competition; did it begin in 1824?—The law came into operation in 1826.

3498. What law?—It passed in 1824.

3499. What law?—For the admission of foreign manufactured ribbons.

3500. Do you think that law has operated against you?—Yes, it has, unquestionably.

3501. Have the weavers never heard that there has been an increase in the export of silk goods?—Do you mean ribbons?

3502. Silk goods generally?—Not ribbons.

3503. Did you ever hear that there was an increase in the export of silk goods generally since 1824?—I am not acquainted with the silk trade generally. I have heard that broad silks have been exported, but if the question is confined to ribbons, I should say our exports are not larger.

3504. Has there been a considerable increase in the import of ribbons since that period?—A great increase.

3505. Do the weavers attribute this decline to that circumstance?—Their distress? Yes, in part.

3506. Mainly to that cause?—That is the chief cause of reducing the quantity of work.

3507. Do you think if there were a stop put to these importations their circumstances would be improved?—I think they would.

3508. Have the weavers ever compared their own circumstances with that of their neighbours, the farmers?—I do not know, perhaps they look at home and not abroad; perhaps they are not well competent to judge of the condition of the farmers.

3509. Do they not see that the farmers are as much depressed almost as they are?—The farmers, if you were to judge from appearance, live better and dress better than the weavers.

3510. The farm labourers?—We are so little surrounded by agriculturists in Coventry, the district where it is carried on, we are little acquainted with.

3511. Are your silk weavers not in the ribbon trade complaining?—Frequently and loudly complaining of the distress, I have heard.

3512. Yet the law of 1824 does not seem to have operated against their silk goods?—I cannot give an answer to that question; I have only heard that they exported goods, but I do not know it for a fact; I have no knowledge of it.

3513. You have no reason to disbelieve the fact?—I did not hear to what extent.

3514. As this law has not operated against them, and they are also in great distress, do they attribute their distress entirely to that cause, as you do?—I am not conversant with it.

3515. Have you ever attributed your distress to any other cause than the law of 1824?—Yes, arising from low wages; we attribute it in part to what is called individual competition, the fighting of one against another, and the reducing of wages unnecessarily.

3516. Not immediately to the interference of foreign competition?—Not immediately.

3517. Is there an immense quantity of French ribbons in Coventry?—I cannot say; I have not heard this year.

3518. Have the wages of the weaver ever been reduced during your experience for the same sort of work?—Yes; the list of 1816 was something under the price paid in 1809 and 1810, or the wages then paid; that was before the high wages; the lists of 1816 were something lower; the list of 1819 is lower still; the list of 1826 was lower still, and the list of 1829 lower still.

3519. Is there any difference in the wages now paid by the manufacturer of Coventry;

Coventry; does one manufacturer pay a higher rate of wages than the other?—In the engine branch I do not know that there is, but in the single-hand there are all manner of prices.

3520. When the wages are reduced, does the manufacturer generally approve of the reduction?—Ofttimes a majority of the manufacturers have declared their hostility to the reduction.

3521. Can a small number of manufacturers in your district, by beginning a reduction of wages, cause it to be general?—Very easily.

3522. Do those who first reduce, or those who follow the example, derive any benefit from such a course?—Those who first attempt it, so long as they keep it a secret, they derive the advantage unquestionably; they either keep a part of what they take from the weaver to themselves, or if they give it to a wholesale house they have the advantage of the sale when the goods of the other are locked up in stock.

3523. Can such things remain long a secret?—Not long.

3524. The advantage then is temporary?—Yes.

3525. And to the disadvantage of the fair-paying master?—Yes.

3526. Which manufacturers derive the large profits, those paying the lower or higher rate of wages?—Those who pay lower.

3527. Are those averse from reducing the wages governed and controlled by those inclined to reduce the wages?—They are virtually compelled to yield so long as the others get work made at a lower price.

3528. State how it is a disadvantage to the fair-paying master if the wages should not be reduced?—Ofttimes there is an under price paid in secret, generally so, and when it is discovered, the fair manufacturer averse to it will keep the high price, hoping the efforts of the weavers will be successful to bring those parties reducing up to the price; all this time the master that is averse to reduction keeps paying the full price his stock is accumulating. Then, if the reduction cannot be prevented, the one has had it made perhaps at 20 per cent. under the other. If he succeeds in reducing the wages, then comes a reduction on the whole stock of the fair-paying manufacturer.

3529. He suffers a loss on the stock he has manufactured at a higher rate of wages than his neighbour?—Yes, so far as we judge.

3530. Would it be a benefit to the manufacturer and the weaver if some plan could be devised to raise the wages, and make the rate more uniform than it now is?—It would be, decidedly, to the weavers and the manufacturers. I have been to them again and again for years; they have almost uniformly and universally expressed a wish that something could be done to make the prices uniform.

3531. Is it desirable that a power to regulate wages should be possessed by those manufacturers who are averse to reducing wages?—Yes, that they should have the power, I think, is more desirable than they should who are anxious to reduce it.

3532. Can you suggest any plan which would place the power to regulate the wages in the hands of those who are averse to reduce the wages?—The system that has generally been pursued at Coventry, and would be most agreeable to the feelings of all parties there, would be for the manufacturers and weavers to be parties united in regulating the price by deputation.

3533. Would you constitute a local board of trade for that purpose?—Decidedly, that would be preferable.

3534. Do you prefer a local board of trade to a general board?—A local board, for I think they would best understand it.

3535. The description of goods manufactured at Coventry is confined to that neighbourhood, or within 10 or 15 miles of it?—Yes, I think within less than that; Atherstone is 13 miles off it, Nuneaton is eight miles.

3536. Do you find that the ribbon branch is carried on in any other part of the country which has intercourse much with Coventry?—I should not think it does much, though it is said that the steam works in Congleton affect us in the black sarsnets, and I believe it is true that they do.

3537. Is there any quantity of ribbons made at Congleton and Macclesfield, independent of Coventry?—At Congleton I think there are a great many, and there has been for years before my time; the trade has been established these many years.

3538. You think that if a board of trade were established at Coventry, it would be

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be a good point to regulate the whole of the ribbon trade?—So far as our district is concerned.

3539. Do you think that a board of trade would be an advantage without a legislative interference?—There must be some power to render their decisions binding.

3540. If there were no legislative interference, would it not be in the power of some person inclined to reduce the wages to break in upon the regulations?—Yes, certainly.

3541. And it would require legislative interference to bind that person down?—Yes.

3542. Could true returns of the wages paid by the manufacturers in Coventry be obtained by inquiry of them and their weavers?—Yes, I think it could.

3543. Could the probable quantity of goods of each sort, made by every manufacturer, be obtained in like manner?—Yes, the manufacturers could furnish that.

3544. Would it not be easy to select the least number of manufacturers given in such returns, who together make at least one half of the goods of each sort in each parish or township where hand-loom weaving is carried on in your county?—Yes, I think it would decidedly in our town.

3545. Would it not be easy to take a majority of one or two out of those cases you have selected, who are paying the highest rate of wages for each sort of goods?—Yes, it would.

3546. Would it be easy to determine the average wages paid by the majority for each sort of goods?—Yes; I think the manufacturers could make it out from their books.

3547. The average wages having been so taken from a voluntary rate paid by many in the trade, could any just complaint be urged by any manufacturer against a law that required that no manufacturer in each parish or township should pay less wages that that average?—There could be no just complaint.

3548. Can you say whether there afterwards would be some inequality in wages; that is, would some manufacturers pay the average only, and would others pay something more than the average?—They never would pay more, except in cases of very extraordinary demand, when they might be induced to do it to obtain work; but that is a very rare instance in the ribbon trade.

3549. Is it not the habit of manufacturers to pay with a large capital a higher rate of wages to secure to themselves the best class of workmen?—Not in Coventry.

3550. If returns of wages and of goods manufactured were required by law periodically, and the average wages taken as before stated, would the practice cause a slow but certain rise in wages?—It would; it would render things more steady a good deal; there would be more confidence among manufacturers, and would enable us to take advantage of favourable circumstances.

3551. Would such a process create a competition to correct liberal wages, and stay the competition now so much complained of to reduce wages?—I think it would have a tendency to destroy that attempt to reduce wages.

3552. Are the persons engaged in the ribbon trade persons of large or small capital?—The majority of them I should say small; there are some large capitalists.

3553. If there are some large, would not the larger capitalist be able to bear up against a minimum rate of wages the better than the small capitalists?—The small capitalists are by far the greatest number, and if the small capitalists were to unite to attempt a reduction, I do not think the larger capitalists could prevent it, they are so few in number when compared with the others.

3554. Do you suppose the larger capitalists on the whole produce half the goods?—I do not know how many there are large capitalists; those reputed large capitalists do not.

3555. Supposing such a law as this to come into operation, that those parties being the fewest number, who together produce half the goods, if such people had the power of controlling wages, then if there were a law to that effect, small capitalists would be obliged to come into those regulations?—Yes, if there was a law to compel it.

3556. If that regulation of the rate of wages were to bear heavy on the small capitalists, would it not have the effect of causing them to throw up trade, and so throw out of employment the weavers whom they had previously employed?—

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I am not aware that it would tend in the slightest degree to their injury to render the prices uniform.

3557. But if you have to meet a foreign competition which has no such regulation of wages, would not that tend to disable the small capitalist from giving so high a rate of wages as that fixed by the regulation?—I do not apprehend we have anything to fear from that; our rate of wages I believe is below the amount of duty paid on the importation, and if there is no fresh alteration, still further to reduce the duties, I do not know that they would sustain any injury.

3558. Are you not afraid of foreign competition?—It is an injury to us, decidedly.

3559. You think it is the greatest injury you have to bear up against?—In the fancy trade especially.

3560. Do you not think that if a law were passed, such as has now been described to you, that it would have the effect of inducing manufacturers to employ the weavers in slack times with more confidence than they do now, when subjected to the work being taken and given out by certain manufacturers at a reduced price?—Yes, I am certain it would.

3561. Do you not think it would have the effect, on the whole, of giving quite as much work to weavers at the full wages?—Quite as much, and much more regular than they now have it.

3562. If such regulations were made, of course the weavers would, at all times, be ready to comply with such reductions as would be rendered necessary by competition from other quarters, either from any part of the home trade or the foreign?—I have no hesitation in saying the weavers would acquiesce in such regulations as circumstances dictated.

3563. Have you seen a plan, proposed by Mr. Fielden, to establish regulations such as have been described?—I have seen it, but I have not examined it particularly.

3564. Was it at all known by the weavers of Coventry before you came up?—Yes, it has been heard of by them; I have heard it mentioned, and I heard them, long before Mr. Fielden mentioned that measure, express a wish that there was a something established to regulate wages.

3565. But that specific plan?—Yes; the idea entertained in Coventry is, that Mr. Fielden's Bill is with a view to regulate wages, and to render them uniform; I know the weavers, as a body, are friendly to it.

3566. You are aware that Mr. Fielden's plan is only another mode of coming to the same result as you yourself propose, by a board of trade?—Yes, I believe that is the object of his Bill.

3567. Another method of coming to the same end?—Yes.

3568. You have not had an opportunity of comparing the two plans that produce this result?—No.

3569. How were you appointed to come here?—At a public meeting.

3570. Of weavers?—Yes.

3571. Called by whom?—Called by the mayor.

3572. Did they give you any instructions as to what you were to say about Mr. Fielden's Bill, or the board of trade?—Not any.

3573. Did they appoint you because they considered you capable and willing to express their sentiments?—They knew I was willing; I suppose they thought I was capable.

3574. Do you know enough of Mr. Fielden's plan to give an opinion; to say whether, if an Act were passed, such as Mr. Fielden proposed—have you read it?—Yes.

3575. Do you think it could easily be evaded if it passed?—I have not examined it sufficiently to answer that question; I am certain of one thing; I had but one opinion on hearing it read, that it would have a tendency to create harmony in Coventry, and prevent such continued disturbances arising from attempts at reduction.

3576. Would it have this advantage over a board of trade, that it would not take up the weaver's or the master's time so much in frequent meetings?—I should not judge that very frequent meetings would be required; for unless some new circumstance arose to render alterations necessary, the thing would go on steadily. I do not think either the manufacturers or the weavers; I can answer for the weavers; they would not mind the time so that it would effect the object.

3577. Have you an idea that there would be an objection on the part of the

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manufacturers to meet the weavers?—They have generally met the weavers in times of dispute; so far as uniformity of price goes, they have almost universally expressed themselves anxious for uniformity.

3578. They have already at different periods, when those changes took place in the list of prices, shown a disposition to meet the weavers?—Yes.

3579. Have you seen sufficiently of Mr. Fielden's plan to know or give an opinion whether the power there given for settling disputes with regard to work by arbitration be sufficient?—As to the quality of the work I think arbitration would have that effect.

3580. Sufficient effect?—Yes, in disputes of that nature.

3581. The Committee understand that your object, or those who sent you here, is to establish some mode of regulating wages, but that they are indifferent as to the mode pursued provided it accomplishes the end they have in view?—Their grand object is to have some mode to regulate them, though I think a local board would be preferred to a general board.

3582. In point of fact, a general board could not be made to apply to your trade, for it is exclusively, if not, nearly so, carried on in the district around Coventry?—It is.

3583. Therefore a board to regulate the wages of other trades would not apply to you, because a knowledge of your trade could not be acquired by any persons unconnected with it?—No; but the parties at home would know the difficulties they had to contend with, and the circumstances by which it is surrounded.

3584. How do you think such a board ought to be composed, to give confidence and satisfaction to the manufacturers as well as the weavers?—I should say that in order to give satisfaction to both parties, there ought to be some of both parties constituting the board.

3585. You have had meetings for the regulation with regard to wages at seven or eight periods since 1816?—Yes.

3586. And on all those occasions the masters met the men, and the list was agreed upon between both parties?—Yes, both parties were in every instance consulted.

3587. The masters never showed any indisposition to meet the men on those occasions?—No; in 1819 I think the weavers were not parties to the making of the list, but the list was issued out for their approbation, and assented to. In 1831 I know the weavers were present with the manufacturers, the manufacturers went as a body, and about seven weavers were deputed to wait on them.

3588. You stated that the general opinion among the weavers is, that Parliament could regulate the rate of wages?—Yes.

3589. But you stated, that if there were a strong demand, wages would rise above the average rate?—No, the question was, if there were a board to regulate wages, would not the manufacturer go above that rate; I said, never, unless on an extraordinary demand.

3590. If there was an extraordinary demand they would?—That is a thing unknown to us.

3591. If you stated an extraordinary demand might oblige some manufacturers to give above the average rate, would not an extraordinary slackness compel others to offer under that?—I know there have been instances in times past, such as the period from 1812 to 1814, when the manufacturers offered a higher rate of wages; they carried on an amazing trade; they never would operate unless there was an extraordinary demand; I do not think there would be that demand.

3592. If there was more work, the weavers' wages would rise?—It might be attempted to do it then.

3593. If there were more weavers than work, would not the wages fall; is not that your experience?—Certainly that has been the case.

3594. It is in your experience that there has been a great decline in wages?—Yes.

3595. And sometimes a rise?—There has been no rise since 1816.

3596. You have no fluctuations?—Yes.

3597. Have they not grown out of the employment of the trade when wages have rose?—I have known trade to be very good when there was no advance of wages.

3598. If the goodness continued long and the demand has been roused, did you ever know that go on without a rise of wages?—I never knew of a rise of wages except in one instance, just before the termination of the war.

3599. A great

3599. A great briskness of trade?—A very great demand.

3600. You stated, that if there were an average rate of wages, that there would be a constant rise?—I stated it would promote a gradual rise, as circumstances justified it.

3601. Do you think that constant rise could go on if the demand slackened, if it were not to the interests of the masters to give increased wages?—I think that the rise would be gradual; for I think there would be a confidence established; manufacturers would know that none were paying below them.

3602. Some manufacturers could not sell all the goods they made; do you think others could go on?—No.

3603. A constant rise would go on, nobody knows where, but would it not be always stopped by the state of the markets?—When things were slack they would not attempt to advance the price then.

3604. Then there would be a fall back?—I do not think there would be a fall in price; a reduction in price would do nobody good.

3605. Suppose by this constant advance wages were doubled?—I am aware of the answer I have given, but I had no doubt but there might be some advance; but I should rather have said, probably some slight advance; I do not apprehend wages would rise a great deal.

3606. You have stated that you have seen great fluctuations since 1824; have not our manufactures very much improved in quality and character since?—The fancy part has.

3607. The patterns are much more beautiful?—Yes.

3608. Much more perfect?—Yes.

3609. How are the patterns now found at Coventry?—A great many of them originate there.

3610. Are there any artists who now get a livelihood by preparing patterns?—There are some as designers.

3611. And there are a good many patterns imported, are there not?—I think they are compelled a good deal to copy the French.

3612. Do not you think it would be of very great service, if in a town like Coventry some of the intelligent children of the weavers were instructed in the arts, that they might produce patterns themselves?—There are some clever designers now; it certainly might assist in producing designs.

3613. Do not you think that frequent meetings and a friendly understanding between the master and the weaver would be very desirable, if they could be established?—It would be desirable; that is why we hail this measure, as it would create, we think, a good feeling, and that more permanently.

3614. Would there be any difficulty in establishing an elective body among the weavers, who should choose certain delegates for the purpose of discussing matters of dispute between the delegates also to be sent by the masters?—There would be no difficulty on the part of the weavers.

3615. Have you heard the masters object to such a delegation on their part?—No, I have hardly heard manufacturers give an opinion at all about it.

3616. You stated you had four looms?—Yes.

3617. What are your average earnings by the week out of those four looms?—It is seldom or ever they are all going.

3618. But in any week in which they are going, how much could you earn per week?—I should reckon my own earnings about 10*s.*; my wife works on another, I think she gets 7*s.* or 8*s.*, and I have journey hands on the others.

3619. How much do they pay?—They give me 2*s.*; 1*s.* for the loom, and 1*s.* for standing.

3620. What is the value of a loom at Coventry?—They are much depreciated in point of value; their value depends on the demand for them; that is to say, a broad eight-shuttle loom in my shop, which two or three years back was constantly employed for broad ribbons then in demand, would have fetched 8*l.* or 9*l.*, but now would fetch little; it has not had a shoot in it for five months, looms of that description being altered. I have got narrow looms, twenties, they would not fetch above a sovereign or 25*s.* two or three years ago, they would now fetch 5*l.* or 6*l.* if mounted for satins; there is a great demand for them; but the hand that worked the eight can work the 20.

3621. What you call the engine-loom has been applied in France to the production of the most beautiful and perfect ribbons?—We have them in Coventry.

3622. You stated, the most beautiful were made by the single shuttles?—When

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I speak of that, the part I belong to is the plain part of the engine trade; there is the plain, but I say the single-hand loom makes ribbons we cannot make with the engine.

3623. Are you aware of your having stated that the most beautiful ribbons were produced by the single-hand loom; are you aware that a late improvement has produced several ribbons on the same loom of the most beautiful patterns?—I did not say the most beautiful; they make works we cannot do now: there are works, such as brocades and barred satins and plaids, that cannot be made on the engine-loom.

3624. Do you not think it would be better both for the master manufacturer as well as the weaver, if in slack times a less quantity of work was produced, than for a reduction of wages to take place by some of the manufacturers?—Yes, I should say decidedly better for the weavers.

3625. Do not you think it would be better for the manufacturer, as well as that it would afford protection to those with stock on hand from depreciation?—Yes, I think it would.

3626. What do you consider the decline of wages to have been since the free-trade system commenced in the year 1826?—I should think from 30 to 50 per cent. is the reduction since 1824.

3627. Do you attribute that to the interference of French goods with goods manufactured at Coventry?—Not entirely, not the whole.

3628. But the major part you attribute to that?—Yes; we had a reduction immediately in 1826, and in 1829, when there was some alteration in the duties, we had a reduction of 15 per cent., which was entirely owing to that.

3629. Independently of the interference of foreign goods, do you not consider that the reduction in wages may in part be attributed to the competition of the manufacturers among themselves?—I am certain it is attributable to that, in part.

3630. Do you think the list of prices, which was established in 1832, was departed from by some manufacturers in the early part of this year?—It was.

3631. What portion of manufacturers did employ weavers at prices less than the list?—It was reported that one or two were doing it quietly; then one or two openly avowed their intention to reduce; that led to a deputation from the weavers.

3632. It was not more than three or four persons caused that reduction?—No.

3633. Were they considerable manufacturers?—Those two manufactured a good deal, a great many ribbons.

3634. Were they of the largest class of manufacturers?—Not the largest capitalists, nor the largest manufacturers.

3635. They did not belong to the class of the largest manufacturers?—Certainly approaching to it.

3636. In consequence of those two or three manufacturers reducing the list of prices, there was a sort of resistance made to it by the weavers by a turn-out?—Yes.

3637. How long did that continue?—I think a fortnight.

3638. Was there any agreement subsequently between the manufacturers and the weavers?—Yes; a proposal was made to the weavers through the town committee, a committee of gentlemen formed between the weavers and masters. There were proposals made to the weavers to the effect, that if they would consent to one part they must give the other part; the weavers yielded to it.

3639. So that, in point of fact, the list of prices in weaving were reduced in consequence of the interference of those manufacturers, taking advantage of the distress of the men?—Yes; there were but two who positively refused to give the price: the weavers struck against it, but their poverty would not enable them to continue to resist it long.

3640. Could not the master manufacturers generally object to the course adopted by those two or three manufacturers reducing the list of prices?—With those two exceptions, every manufacturer who was waited upon (and I believe all were waited upon with one or two exceptions) said they did not wish for any reduction; that a reduction would do no good, that was the sentiment.

3641. Did they state it was not called for by the state of the trade at the time?—They did.

3642. Did not some of them say, it would be injurious to the master manufacturers generally?—Yes, to them.

3643. You think, then, that if a board of trade were established, having the power

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power of regulating wages, that it would have a tendency to prevent those depressions which are injurious to the weaver and manufacturer?—I am persuaded it would have a tendency to prevent it.

3644. Do you think the master manufacturer—you say such a board would be highly approved of by the weavers—do you think the manufacturers would approve of it as well?—I give it from their statements; that is a desire they have expressed again and again, for uniformity. I judge from these same circumstances they would.

3645. You said you were injured by foreign competition; in what way is that injury done?—They are mostly fancy goods that are introduced; I believe there is a taste in this country for foreign productions, and especially fancy ribbons.

3646. Is it by underselling?—No.

3647. Do they smuggle?—I believe they do; then they may undersell; but goods that fairly pass through the Custom-house they do not undersell.

3648. Would there be any advantage from increasing the duty on importation?—If a more effective method of preventing smuggling could be resorted to, it would help us.

3649. A method of enforcing the duty?—Yes; and the duty fairly levied, so as to prevent smuggling, that would assist us.

3650. The duties are 30 per cent., do you know if they are properly taken?—I fear they are not properly taken.

3651. Suppose the board of trade rose wages higher than the masters could afford to pay, how could such wages be prevented from falling again?—I do not apprehend they would be raised above, for the masters would be parties in the board. I think the price would rise according as circumstances would allow, and they would judge of the circumstances.

3652. Do you think at present the masters have got any large profits?—Really I do not know; they say the profits are small.

3653. Have there been many failings among masters?—Not a great many; latterly there has been one or two, but not manufacturers of any extent.

3654. Do you consider that the price of ribbons has fallen in as great a degree as the wages of labour?—They cannot do that, for when they take 3 *d.* or 6 *d.* off us in the manufacturing of 36 yards, they cannot give it to the public, they cannot reduce the ribbon.

3655. What has been the fall in the general price of ribbons in the last 25 years?—I cannot answer anything about the retail price.

3656. The wholesale?—I do not know; I do not sell the ribbon.

3657. You say you attribute a great part of the depression to the desire of our manufacturers to undersell one another?—Yes.

3658. Do you think that desire exists in a greater degree than it did during the war?—Whether the desire does, I do not know, the practice is more frequently resorted to.

3659. Why do you think they have recourse to that practice more than in the war?—During the latter part of the war there was employment for all, therefore they could not carry their desires into effect.

3660. There was full employment at the close of the war?—Previously to the close of the war.

3661. Depression, then, commenced with the peace?—It did.

3662. Do you think that if the masters had continued to make fair profits they would have felt a desire to compete with each other, and to break down the wages of labour?—I do not know; I know this, that ofttimes men have attempted to reduce, while other manufacturers declared there was no necessity for it.

3663. Supposing the price of ribbons should fall, and the profits of the masters become very small, does not their own safety compel them to break down the wages of labour?—If there is something to render wages uniform, I do not think there is anything in the circumstances of the case that could render it desirable for them to reduce it.

3664. Do you think the masters at present could possibly live by their trade if they were to pay the same wages as they paid during the war?—No, I do not think they could afford to pay the price they did then.

3665. You are aware that there is a general complaint among the masters, of the bad state of trade?—Yes, manufacturers complain.

3666. You say that wages have fallen in a very great degree since 1824?—Yes, they have.

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3667. Do you attribute that fall of wages to the competition between masters?—Not entirely; we were reduced in consequence of the foreign competition; we attribute it to the two causes.

3668. Suppose all articles in England should have experienced a similar fall with ribbons, should you then think that the importation of foreign ribbons had caused that general fall of price?—On other articles? No, I do not think that.

3669. Suppose all articles to fall in the same degree as ribbons, you would not think the importation of ribbons would occasion that general fall of price?—The importation of ribbons operates two ways; it has reduced our wages and taken our employment.

3670. Have you ascertained that there is a great consumption of foreign ribbons in place of English ribbons in our markets?—We have been told by importers that they were imported largely last spring.

3671. Have your ever heard that the manufacturers in France complain of English competition in the same degree as the English complain of the French?—They do not complain of the competition in ribbons; I have not heard that they do.

3672. You have not heard that there is great distress at Lyons?—I have heard of a disturbance there, what was the cause of it I do not know.

3673. You say from 1812 to 1814 there was an excellent trade?—Yes.

3674. Supposing all trades generally should have been very prosperous then, and should now be very unprosperous, do you not think there might be some general cause to effect that general result?—Yes.

3675. Which general cause could not have been affected by the importation of foreign ribbons?—I should not attribute the distress of the country to the importation of foreign ribbons.

3676. There has been no rise of wages since 1816?—No.

3677. In 1824 and 1825 were workmen doing better than they are now?—I should think they were, for prices were better than now.

3678. These complaints began in 1826, did they?—We had a severe shock in 1826, and in 1827 and 1828 we were pretty well off for work, but since 1829 the want of employment has been great.

3679. Have you reason to think in 1828 there was a less importation of foreign ribbons than now?—Yes, I think there was; I have heard the first year their importation was legalized, they were not aware of the lengths at which we cut our pieces; we cut them at 36 yards; they cut them at 30. I think Mr. Ellice was instrumental in getting some order which almost destroyed the effect of the importation for the first year; and I think they were not so conversant with our markets, and had not that intimacy with our importers at that time as they have now.

3680. Supposing a board of trade or other measure should be adopted, for the purpose of raising wages, do you think it would be possible for the masters to pay such raised wages at the present price of ribbons?—I do not know what the prices of ribbons are; I only know of their profits being bad from what I hear; I do not know from having had ribbons to sell.

3681. You think it is not possible to rise wages unless profits exist out of which to pay them?—I think they could not afford to pay them unless they get profit.

3682. Therefore no measures would be effectual unless those measures were attended with a general prosperity among manufacturers?—I believe I answered the question, that I thought it might promote a continued rise, but I do not apprehend it would promote a very great rise; it would prevent further reduction.

3683. Do you find the men work harder when the wages are low?—Sometimes they are compelled to do it, if they get work.

3684. In 1814, when the workmen were prosperous, they would not work so hard as they do now?—They work a fair quantity of hours, they earned more money; they might not work so hard as they do now when they get work to do.

3685. You think when wages fall, if they get employment they work harder to make up?—Yes, they are driven to it to make extra hours.

3686. You think the increase of work produces a glut of commodities, and occasions a still further reduction of price?—Yes.

3687. You stated that a fair weaver could make about 10*s.* a week, from which there is a reduction to the amount of 2*s.* 6*d.*; how many hours a day should he work to make that rate of wages?—I should think on an average 12 hours a day.

3688. You have also stated that at the present time the weavers are pretty well employed?—Yes, just now.

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3689. This is a time of year of all others when the work is most plentiful?—Yes, we consider if we have none now we shall have none all the year.

3690. Do you find the employment as good now as at this time last year?—Yes, I think it is better than last year, upon the whole.

3691. Why?—It is fashion rather that varies it; there is a great demand now for narrow ribbons; ladies wear rosettes under their caps and bonnets: a great many narrow looms which were unemployed last year are in full work now.

3692. In point of fact you find there is a greater quantity of employment at this time of the year than another?—Yes, it is our best time of the year.

3693. So that when you have been well employed at this time, you have been at other parts of the year out of employment?—Yes, especially the winter season.

3694. You have stated in answer to a question just now, that a reduction in the wages of the weaver from 3*d.* or 6*d.* per piece, would make a material difference?—Twopence a piece would make a great difference in the engine-loom.

3695. What is the length of a piece?—Thirty-six yards.

3696. Would the difference of 6*d.* per piece in weaving produce the effect upon the weaver, in one case to place him in a situation of some comfort, and in the other of distress?—Yes, a great deal; because he may make 12, sometimes 20 pieces together; I am speaking of the engine-loom.

3697. You have stated that your patterns and your fabrics have been very much improved since 1824?—Yes, the patterns.

3698. Notwithstanding that improvement, you are worse paid than you were then?—Yes.

3699. Is there any other mode of relief you would look to besides these boards of trade?—Yes, we hope to obtain some relief if possible from the prevention of smuggling, and the enforcing of the duties that are levied on the importation of foreign goods.

3700. Any other?—No, we are not apprehensive of any other.

3701. What do think if the Corn Laws were taken off?—So far as we are concerned as weavers, I think the Corn Laws would assist us; repealing them would assist us.

3702. Why do you think that?—First, it would reduce the price of bread, and then we think the freer importation of corn the more extensive the barter, or exchanging of ribbons for corn.

3703. Then you are in favour of the free trade of corn, and against the free trade of ribbons?—We are, as poor men.

3704. You were much better off when flour was 5*s.* 6*d.* than now, when it is 1*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

3705. If you reduce the price of corn you will be still worse off?—Though bread is reduced, rent and many other things are not reduced as well as bread, and a weaver with a family, though bread is a very principal thing in his house, it is not the only thing.

3706. Then as compared with 20 years ago, what difference has there been in the sort of ribbons manufactured by hand-loom weavers, taking the fancy goods; have you a greater quantity of fancy ribbons made now than 20 years ago?—I think there is a greater quantity in Coventry, but decidedly less in the country than 20 years ago; then nearly the whole of the fancy trade was in the country, and now it is in a great measure in Coventry; it arose from the circumstance of the introduction of a machine called the Jacquard machine.

3707. Twenty years ago plain ribbons were more made, with plain colours?—No, a ribbon without a figure.

3708. Were they more used 20 years ago?—I do not know.

3709. Farming servants and all that class of people?—I do not know that they were in use; but they were more made in the country. This machine is so expensive, it is therefore applied more to the engine-loom than the single-hand. Before this machine, the single-hand would make it much better.

3710. Was not plain ribbon more worn among the lower orders of people?—I do not know.

3711. Do you ever see a farming servant in plain ribbon now?—I have not taken that notice.

3712. You say the wages began to decrease in 1816?—Yes.

3713. Are you aware that the price of corn has been declining ever since that period?—

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period?—I cannot say; I think it has; I do not think it has been so high since, as it was a few years before.

3714. Have you been better off since the decline in the price of corn?—I do not think we have; I think our wages have kept pace with the decline of corn, and gone before it in many instances.

3715. If there was a free importation of corn, what do you think would be the effect on the agriculture of the country?—I do not know hardly what would be the effect; I hardly hold myself competent to give an opinion as to the effect.

3716. If the effect were to bring corn into this country cheaper than it can be produced here, would it be worth the while of the British farmer to go on cultivating his land?—I hardly know what profits he clears.

3717. Suppose it is brought here at a cheaper price than he produces it on the English land, would he continue to cultivate his land in consequence of a free importation of foreign grain?—I am not aware what reduction it would effect.

3718. Suppose the case of corn being brought here at a cheaper rate than the British farmer could produce it on British soil, would he cultivate his soil at a loss?—No, I should think not; but it must lead to a reduction of rent on his land.

3719. But supposing the land rent-free?—If the land was rent-free, and he could not produce the corn so as to live, he would give it over.

3720. Would not the effect of that be to throw out of employment a great number of labourers?—Yes, if there was no work it would.

3721. If those labourers, when thus disemployed, were to come in competition in the labour market at Coventry, and compete with the weavers, do you think that would have a tendency to raise the wages of the weavers?—No; decidedly not.

3722. Then, though you think that the taking off the Corn Laws might probably be advantageous to the weaver; is it your opinion that it would also prove to be disadvantageous likewise?—I do not think it would be any profit to the agricultural labourer; I do not think the agricultural labourers would be benefited by it.

3723. Do you think the manufacturers would give their weavers all the advantages of the reduction of grain, if freely imported?—It would depend (if there was a local board of trade) what case the weaver could make out, to show what advantage could be derived.

3724. Are you aware that the corn is 40 *s.*, and that the time you were most prosperous was when the corn was at 100 *s.* a quarter?—I was not aware this was the exact price. I only know by what we call the stone, we buy it at 1 *s.* 6 *d.* a stone.

3725. Has the manufacturer given his weaver the benefit of that great reduction?—No, we have gone down in price since that period we speak of.

3726. If he has not done it, and there has been this great reduction from 100 *s.* to 40 *s.*, do you think that is a reason to expect he would do it in case of a further reduction?—We do not expect we shall derive any advantage in that shape, but we think the lower the flour is, the more we shall be able to get for the same money, and it might probably lead to export trade.

3727. If you lost your home market at the same time you gained a foreign market, would that be an advantage to you?—No, I do not think it would, unless the foreign market were more extensive than the home.

3728. Is it not in the power of foreign states to create prohibitory duties, to prevent your goods coming?—Yes.

3729. Is there a probability this country would ever prohibit your selling to your home consumers?—No.

3730. Are you not much more independent in your home market than in your foreign market?—I should judge so.

3731. Would the weaver in Coventry cling most to the foreign or the home trade?—We have no foreign trade.

3732. If the Corn Laws were taken away, you would be changing a certain for an uncertain good?—We should hope to retain the one and get the other.

3733. Do not you think if bread was cheaper, you would consume a great deal more; the weavers?—Many would.

3734. If you could get cheaper bread, you would consume more?—Yes.

3735. Do not you suppose that if foreign countries sent corn here, they would get paid for the corn?—Yes, in some shape.

3736. Do you think they would give us corn without taking goods for it?—Perhaps

Perhaps that would depend on circumstances; if they found this a profitable market to bring corn, and we would not import it only on the condition that they would take our surplus manufactures.

3737. You do not suppose any one would send corn to this country without getting paid?—No, either in money or manufactures.

3738. If you pay for them in money, as money does not grow, you would send something out of the country to get the money?—Yes, you must.

3739. Gold and silver is not produced in England, and if they come they are paid for as other articles?—Yes, I suppose so, of course.

3740. All the corn you take from a foreign country would be paid for in something or other?—Yes.

3741. Do not you pay for all the corn bought in England; do not you give your labour for it?—Yes.

3742. Would it not be better to get more corn for less labour; if for instance, in six hours you could get two bushels from a foreigner, while the English grower of corn would require 12 hours?—It would be better, so far as it affected us.

3743. You stated before that when wheat was 5 *s.* a stone, you got more of it than you did now when it was 1 *s.* 6 *d.*?—Yes.

3744. Therefore it does not follow, when it is cheap you get more of it?—No, it happened so that at the time the flour was so dear, our trade was in an artificial state, extraordinarily good. Had that state of the price of provisions been continued with the present state of wages, people must have starved on the face of the earth.

3745. Have you not to work longer hours to obtain bread at 1 *s.* 6 *d.* a stone, than to obtain it when it is 5 *s.* a stone?—Yes; but there are so many other things connected with housekeeping besides bread, such as rent.

3746. Would a change in the Corn Laws affect your rent?—No, I do not know that it would.

3747. Your experience tells you that you were better off when corn was high, than you have been since it was low?—Yes, we certainly in our locality were better off.

3748. You had more money to pay for it?—Yes, we had more for our labour.

3749. Your employment was more secure?—Yes, we were not exposed to the competition we are now; there was not the competition from abroad, and not so much at home.

3750. Was it a foreign demand at that time?—In a great measure a foreign demand.

3751. What time was that?—Towards the close of the war, I think we had a good trade with America.

3752. You do not think you were better off because you paid a very high price for corn?—No, I do not think that; the cause was, our trade was good.

3753. Have you any assurance that if corn was reduced in price, your wages would not be reduced in a corresponding degree?—I am quite aware that our wages will be reduced, whether the corn is or not, unless some method is adopted to prevent it.

3754. Corn having fallen from 100 *s.* to 40 *s.* a quarter, and your trade considerably increased, have not your wages declined in the same period, your circumstances gradually becoming worse?—It did increase in 1827 and 1828, but then we had a steady price, but lower than 1816 and even lower than 1819; but subsequently to 1828 our trade has been much worse and our prices lower.

3755. Your prices have been lower, while corn has been getting lower at the same time?—Yes.

3756. What assurance have you, if you could still get corn lower than it now is, your wages would not be reduced in the same proportion?—We do not think the reduction of wages is regulated by the reduction of corn.

3757. You do not think a reduction in corn necessarily causes a reduction in wages?—No.

3758. Can you tell us what were the prices you received before 1826, when the Act you have spoken of came into operation; you received the same quantity you now get 10 *s.* a week for?—I cannot state what was the price on all articles, but sixpenny sarsnets were 1 *s.* 6 *d.* for making 36 yards, it is now 1 *s.*; and twopenny satin was about 1 *s.* 4 *d.*, it is now 10 *d.*

3759. At what period do you speak?—I am speaking of the prices now and what they were in 1824.

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3760. Do you know what they were in 1826?—I think they continued till early in 1826; I think there was some alteration in 1826, if I mistake not.

3761. Do you know what they were in 1827?—The same as 1826.

3762. Have your wages fallen in a similar degree as the wages have fallen at Macclesfield and Coventry?—I do not know much about their wages, I do not know what they are paid there.

3763. Have you one-third less now than you had before that Act came into operation?—I am almost certain the 1 *s.* 6 *d.* continued till 1824: I know the list of 1819, which we preserved by means of a turn-out in 1822, gave 1 *s.* 6 *d.* for a sixpenny sarsnet; it is now 1 *s.*; I think it continued up to 1824.

3764. Do you see any reason to conclude, that you will be benefited in your circumstances as weavers, unless some protection be afforded to the manufacturers who are disposed to give better wages?—No, I do not see any reason to suppose our circumstances would be better.

3765. You do not think the introduction of foreign corn, nor any increase in the demand for your manufactures would set you right, without some regulation as to the payment of wages?—No; I think the good we should get from the importation of foreign corn would be, we might get it a little lower; we hope also to get more trade, and therefore some months when we are unoccupied we should be employed.

3766. Do not you think that the principle which makes people compete with one another, and wish to reduce the wages over another who does not wish; do not you think that system would still continue, and they would take advantage of any other circumstance, either in the lower price of provisions, which in fact makes you so miserable, and puts you in a condition of being under the power of those individuals?—The price of provisions has seldom or ever been named when attempts have been made at reduction, they have seldom named that as a reason.

3767. What has been the reason assigned generally?—Since the laws have been steady and unaltered, as regards the importation of foreign ribbons, the reason generally assigned is, that other manufacturers do it. When a reduction is commenced, it is commenced in a sly private way: a manufacturer represents to his weaver they are getting this made cheaper, and I am sure they are; the man is destitute, and has a starving family, is induced to take it; another says, so-and-so is doing, I will do it.

3768. You consider that is the great foundation of your condition, and that the other cases, either of highering or lowering your wages, is under the regulation of that system, and affected by it or taken into account?—My opinion is, that a want of some means to protect uniformity does contribute to our distresses.

3769. Do not you think it is in consequence of the inability of the manufacturers to give you more, from bad trade?—Those attempts are generally made when trade is bad.

3770. You would naturally suppose the manufacturers could not afford to give you more?—I do not think he benefits by it, only so long as he does it privately to himself; if we had 1 *s.* a piece, and it was reduced to 10 *d.*, I do not think he would be a farthing better; it would be given to great holders of ribbons, such as Messrs. Leaf; they would sink it directly.

3771. That difference of 2 *d.* would be such as to place you in a state of the greatest comfort or distress?—Yes, it would effect it.

3772. That 2 *d.* is only on 36 yards, which would scarcely be felt by the public?—No, it could not be felt.

3773. If the workmen could get back to the same state of employment, and to the same rate of wages as was obtained in the 10 years average ending the war, would they be content to pay again the same price for provisions as they paid in the 10 years average?—Yes, and would be better off.

3774. Than now?—Yes, provided they had work; those 10 years we were not exposed to a foreign rival.

3775. As to the change of money from paper to gold; have you ever turned your attention to the effect the contraction of the currency has had in reducing the price of property?—It has had a great effect in reducing the price of property, such as buildings; it very much affected them when it first came into operation.

3776. You do not think it acts on the wages of the labourer throughout the kingdom?—I should think it would tend to reduce them, rather than otherwise.

3777. Is there any general feeling on the subject in Coventry?—On the currency question? I am not aware.

3778. Would

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3778. Would they be content to receive 1*l.* notes instead of sovereigns?—If it would better their condition.

3779. Suppose it gave them back the same state of employment and the same rate of wages they had during the war?—Certainly.

3780. Have you any other statement or document to put in?—I have a document to put in, supposing I had been asked the question. We have been reduced this year, and the reason assigned for the reduction that has been forced upon us this year is, that we are exposed to a competition with the single-hand weaver in the country. The single-hand weaver in the country makes but one ribbon, and till within these few years he used to be paid extra, it being considered he could make it more perfect; I think the same cause exists why he should be paid better now, but on account of the list, and the protection they had being destroyed, they are completely in the hands of the manufacturers, and they have what they can catch, to use a common expression; they have been making articles of the widths of 16-penny, 12-penny, 20-penny and 24-penny, which articles we make in the engine-looms, and in consequence of the low prices at which these people have had them forced upon them, it was urged we must submit to a reduction, or they would take them all from us into the country. This list will show that in the struggle this last March, while we have retained the prices we were receiving 12 months ago on all narrow articles, those which are not made by the single-hand weaver, we have been compelled to submit to a reduction on all the widths made by the single-hand weaver. That is simply because the poor men have no sort of protection.

3781. You say you get in Coventry 9*s.* or 10*s.* a week; what do they get in the country, 3*s.* or 4*s.*?—They would not get much: I have got a person in my shop, who was connected with a family at Barnacle; he told me a little while ago, though there were four at work they did not get above 16*s.* among the whole of them.

3782. You consider the worst condition of the country weavers is attributable to the non-existence of the list?—Yes, they are much worse.

[*The Witness delivered in the following Paper.*]

LIST of Prices at *Coventry.*

Sarsnets.

Width.	March 1834. Price per Piece. s.	d.	Width.	March 1835. Price per Piece. s.	d.
1	–	6	1	–	6
2	–	7	2	–	7
4	–	9	4	–	9
6	1	–	6	1	–
8	1	3	8	1	3
10	1	7	10	1	7
12	1	11	12	1	10
14	2	3	14	2	1
16	2	7	16	2	3
20	3	4	20	3	–
24	4	1	24	3	6

Satins.

1	–	10	1	–	10
2	1	–	2	1	–
4	1	3	4	1	3
6	1	6	6	1	6
8	1	11	8	1	11
12	2	9	12	2	9
16	3	6	16	3	–
20	4	4	20	3	6

David Shaw, called in; and Examined.

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3783. WHERE do you reside?—At Nuneaton.

3784. How long have you lived there?—I have lived at Nuneaton about 13 years.

3785. Are you a weaver?—Yes.

3786. In what branch of the trade?—Single-hand ribbon weaver.

3787. How long have you been a ribbon weaver?—I was born in the next village; I have been a weaver in the branch all my life.

3788. How long have you been a weaver?—Ever since I was able to learn.

3789. Tell us the age at which you began?—I began the winding at six years old.

3790. How many years is that ago?—More than 30 years ago, 34.

3791. What is the state of the hand-loom weavers now?—It is very miserable indeed; we have a population of 8,000 inhabitants at Nuneaton alone, Chilverstone about 2,500, and they are principally dependent, nine-tenths of them, on the silk trade.

3792. Nine-tenths of that population are dependent on the silk trade?—Yes, I believe they are, and they are in a state of unutterable distress, even now, with plenty of work at the present moment to do.

3793. Is the employment better now than it was two years ago?—Yes, I think it is considerably, as it regards more to do; there is always more in the spring season than at any other time of the year, but this appears a rather better revival than it was at that time.

3794. Is there a better employment now than there was 10 years ago?—I am not prepared to say.

3795. Is there more employment?—I think it may be said truly, that there is more work to be done now than there was then.

3796. Are wages as good now as they were then, 10 years ago?—No, they are not; as a proof of that I have a document, the masters' consented list; it emanated from the masters of Nuneaton.

3797. Is that in operation now?—No; I think I have a list from 1816 down to 1831, the last list, if the Committee would take the trouble to look at it.—[*The Witness hands in a paper.*]—These lists are the masters' own act and deed, with the exception of that of 1831; we submitted to that with reluctance, but now we are worse than that, we have no list, and we are now paid 30 per cent. less than the lowest list, in many instances.

3798. Do you attribute that to the falling off in the demand for your goods, or from your not having the protection of a list?—We solely attribute it to not having protection for our labour, that is the greatest cause above all other causes.

3799. When was it you first began to have lists?—I cannot say first; from whatever I have been taught from my parents, and from the trade, there was generally a regulation of prices by the list from time to time, according to the ebbing and flowing of the demand for goods.

3800. Long before you entered the trade?—Yes.

3801. When did they cease to allow you these lists?—The last was made in the year 1831, November 10, and they ceased to abide by it in the latter end of last June, or the beginning of July.

3802. What do you think caused them to give up these lists?—From time to time there has been a manufacturer who has begun to pay less than the list of prices that has been agreed to by the manufacturers at certain given times, and when it has been found out that he has been giving less, the manufacturers have taken advantage of that, and said, that if one could get his goods for so much less, he would do the same. The more honourable manufacturers, and the men of greater extent of trade and capital, we have reason to believe, have sent to us to remonstrate with those men who took off the prices, and have said there was no need to do so, and that if we permitted the price to be taken off we should become ruined by it. But that has been prevalent against our efforts for want of a protection; for though the manufacturers have affected not to wish us to give up the list of prices they have agreed to, yet because we could not of ourselves do any thing, and they did not have a power, and perhaps at the bottom not a principle or wish to give that price, advantage has been taken of the operative classes who were left without help and protection. Thus from time to time we have been reduced, until we have been driven to accept what they have been pleased to give.

3803. You

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3803. You have stated this list of prices has been encroached upon from time to time by persons wishing to reduce the wages?—Yes.

3804. How did it happen that the masters generally submitted to that sort of encroachment before 1831, and that they will not submit to it since 1831?—They do submit to the encroachment since then, inasmuch as we have no list whatever now.

3805. Was not the giving up the list of prices in consequence of their not being able to bear those encroachments on the part of the manufacturers to reduce the wages?—In consequence, as they stated to us, of their not being able to compel them, if they felt disposed, to give higher wages; they could not have the control to say that they should give as much as they were willing to give, when they were willing to give better prices; in consequence of which they were not willing to be beat out of the trade by those who gave a less price, and thus they have been reduced to compete with them, and we have generally suffered the awful consequences of that.

3806. The same state of things existed 20 years ago, because there were other parties endeavouring to encroach on the rate of wages established by the masters; yet they put up with that; and since 1831 you say they have been unable to stand against that competition to reduce wages, which some lower-paying masters wished to introduce?—Yes; on the ground of those masters having lost money from paying for labour, and being able to undersell them.

3807. They were able to do that 20 years ago?—That practice was not attempted.

3808. Then it is only lately that you are speaking of?—The men had less work between the spring and autumn; upon a regular average there has been a little slackness between the end of making the spring goods and the commencement of making the autumn goods, and again betwixt making the winter goods and the spring goods; but when that was the case, we never had a penny attempted to be stopped off us until the last few years, when the trade was bad; but when they had half a gross or a single piece to give us instead of six or eight grosses, the men tried to get the same price for the one piece, the one gross and a half, as when there was full employ for the whole; on that account we could better bear up under it; but now, on the system that is working now, they tell us there is no work for us, and send us away time after time; and we have to go from Nuneaton and Atherstone, which is three miles, and Allistone, which is five miles.

3809. You have stated that the trade has been bad for the last few years; do you think it is in consequence of trade being bad that these encroachments have been made on the regulation as to wages, and that some have not been able to make a profit in a fair and straightforward way, and have endeavoured to undersell the rest of the masters to make a profit?—I am afraid it will be found, if the truth be had from the masters, that it has been a design by a few unprincipled men, who have crept into the trade with a very small capital, and who took off the hireling's wages, and by so doing increased the capital two ways, as we conceive, first by crippling the wages of the working classes, and the other by underselling the manufacturers who gave a better price; and there are instances of that, for some of the more honourable manufacturers have been compelled to lay by their trade or sink their capital in consequence of such innovation being made on the purer principle of the trade, while other manufacturers who have begun in that way, who were poor as ourselves, have to appearance risen to great circumstances.

3810. Then the wish of the weavers of Nuneaton is to establish by law such a sort of regulation as has been established voluntarily by the masters and weavers for a length of time?—Yes, similar to that; only they would be thankful if it could have that protection and that sanction by law that would not allow any manufacturer to violate it to the injury of the whole population and the trade, the respectable manufacturers and the body of operatives.

3811. Is the condition of the weaver better or worse than when you entered the trade?—Worse, considerably.

3812. What were the wages of an able-bodied weaver, that he was receiving 30 years ago, and what are they now?—I myself have got almost, if not quite three times as much per week personally as I can get now working the same number of hours upon the same article.

3813. What can you get per week now?—If I had nothing to do now,—and there is an article I have been at work upon since Christmas and have had plenty

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to do,—if I had nothing to do now but to work at that loom alone, I should work very hard to get 4 *s.* 8 *d.* per week.

3814. Does the power-loom come in competition with you?—In a certain sense it does.

3815. In what sense?—We conceive it produces a cheaper article than the single-hand weaving.

3816. How long has the power-loom been in competition with you and the single-hand?—We have not felt its effects until the last two years; we have been told that has been one means, and we have been told so by manufacturers; we have reason to believe it has been done with the design to get us to a general reduction of wages when we were wished so to do.

3817. When did your wages first begin to be reduced?—After the admission of French ribbons, and from that time to this, it has been taken up as an expression to us, that they were under the necessity of reducing these wages, when they first began to reduce it; but since that commenced there appears to have been a war or a variance of opinion between the manufacturers themselves; the more wealthy body have declared personally, in written documents to that effect, which I have seen from time to time, that there was no necessity whatever to reduce the wages below a certain list, and if reduced it would not better the trade at all, but would worse the condition of the operative, and worse the condition of the more respectable manufacturer: that has been their own declaration.

3818. Is it the opinion of the weavers generally that the reduction in your wages has been caused by the desire of unprincipled manufacturers to reduce wages; do you conceive that to be the cause rather than the introduction of foreign silk or of the power-looms?—Of the two evils we believe that we may say so; as a body of weavers, we believe that to be the greatest evil.

3819. Greater than the introduction of foreign goods, or the introduction of power-looms?—We do, decidedly.

3820. You have stated 4 *s.* 8 *d.* to be about the average earnings per week, if confined entirely to the ribbon trade?—Yes.

3821. Do you conceive that sufficient to supply you with the necessaries of life?—It is not, and I will give a proof.

3822. Is it 4 *s.* 8 *d.* clear money?—No, I should have to find my own candles to make that.

3823. How much is that a week, 6 *d.*?—Sometimes, and sometimes not so much.

3824. Does that include the possession of a loom of your own, or that you hire one?—Yes.

3825. That is supposing you possess one?—If I hire a loom it would come to the same ratio I have expressed; but that is not what the whole of the trade could make; I am speaking as if I were working from 13 to 14 hours a day in a week to earn 4 *s.* 8 *d.*

3826. Suppose you hire that loom, how much does it cost?—I mean to say that is the regular price I get if I work on the spot as a journeyman.

3827. Paying rent for the loom?—No, without it.

3828. What is the rent you allow?—I do not think there is any rent in the single-hand trade for a loom; there is a middle-man, called the undertaker, responsible for the silk which he brings from the manufacturer; he is to make it good at such a weight; he is to take it in, or he is liable to be sent to prison or flogged, and I believe to transportation for a third time; for that he has 4 *d.* out of the shilling of what he receives from the manufacturer, for getting it out and taking it in, and preparing it to put it into the loom of the weaver; that has been considered some hundreds of years, however, long before I was born, the regular charge of the trade; that is the way we have it now; the manufacturer is at no expense to prepare a loom, or to purchase the harness to it, whatever.

3829. What are the average earnings of an average fair-working able-bodied man and his family per week; what do you think they can earn altogether?—Why a man with full employ might probably be working, as I have said, from 13 to 14 hours a day; he might earn what I have said, and his wife might earn from 2 *s.* to 2 *s.* 6 *d.*; and if she had a family she could not do anything besides looking after that family, without it was a few little jobs for ready money.

3830. How many months in the year do you think they are employed?—I think on an average I could not say they are employed for more than from 9 to 10 months on the outside; I should sooner say 9 than 10.

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3831. Do you remember the period before the introduction of foreign ribbons?—Yes.

3832. Between the end of the war and 1824?—Yes.

3833. Was there any fall in wages between the end of the war and 1824?—I do not recollect any until the year 1819.

3834. What caused the fall in 1819?—I am not prepared to answer at the moment what caused it, not from practical knowledge; I did not turn my attention so much to it, therefore I cannot say what was the cause of it; distress has weakened my memory and prevented my paying attention to it.

3835. Judging as well as you can, from your affliction since, what should you state was the cause of the fall of wages about 1819?—I am not prepared to say.

3836. Was your fall as great at that time as subsequently to 1824?—I do not know that it was; but I know it was not for the price agreed to. There was a list in 1819, I have it not with me; I have a list of 1829, from 1816 to 1829 and 1831.

3837. Does not 1816 comprehend that of 1819?—No, there was a reduction from 1816 that stood till 1819, and in 1819 there was another reduction, a small reduction per piece, on every article.

3838. There was a reduction in 1816?—Yes; you have the list before of 1816; that stood till 1819; when they broke through it in 1819 a dispute arose about the wages being reduced, and the manufacturers agreed to name another list; we reduced the list; from that day to this every list has been made a reduced list.

3839. Reductions have been going on since down to 1824, and reductions have taken place since 1824?—Yes.

3840. You cannot attribute the reductions before 1824 to the same cause as produced the reductions since 1824?—I cannot.

3841. You fancy you cannot?—No.

3842. Have the wages of weavers been often reduced during your experience, for the same sort of work?—Yes.

3843. Is there any difference in the wages paid by the manufacturers to the weavers at Nuneaton?—There has been only a difference by one manufacturer. There are five manufacturers in Nuneaton, and four paying for everything they make as much as the fullest houses in Coventry; for many articles as much as the more respectable manufacturers in Coventry: but there is one manufacturer in Nuneaton who is paying we know not what, from one day to another; he pays what he pleases, and pays in a manner that is lower than any manufacturer about that neighbourhood considerably.

3844. Does he employ a number of men?—Yes, he does; he has increased his trade.

3845. He is a large capitalist?—I believe he was not a few years ago; he does a good deal of business now, as if he was.

3846. When the wages were reduced did the manufacturers generally approve of the reduction?—No, and they do not now; he reduces the wages in opposition to their practice, and in opposition to the whole of the operatives.

3847. Is he the only manufacturer at Nuneaton who attempts to reduce the wages?—He is the only one who attempts it.

3848. Then a small number of manufacturers in the district, by beginning the reduction of wages, can cause the reduction to be general?—Yes.

3849. Do either those who first reduce or those who follow derive benefit from such a course?—Those who first reduce derive a benefit; they derive it in my judgment twofold, first, by the reduction they can undersell the manufacturer who pays from 6*d.* to 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.*, perhaps 2*s.* 6*d.* in a piece more than the other manufacturer does pay for labour; consequently they could sell, if they only reduced it 1*s.* a piece, they could sell it 6*d.* a piece under him, and gain 6*d.* profit more than him, by taking that shilling from the work; on the other hand, if they begin with little capital, if they are very poor, by curtailing the working classes, they save the surplus money of the wages, which enables them to become rich and to enlarge their trade; that is a practice, that is a fact which we can prove, here or anywhere else.

3850. Do you think their advantage is permanent, in consequence of reducing the wages at first?—I do.

3851. Did not the Committee understand you to say that a small number of manufacturers had the power to compel the remainder to reduce the wages?—Yes, in a certain sense it brings that as an effect of this cause.

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3852. But if they all reduce the wages in the end to the same level as that begun by the lower-paying man, he ceases to have an advantage?—No, he still goes on reducing.

3853. As soon as they come to him he begins to decline?—Yes; if they were to make a list agreeably to his wishes, perhaps in a fortnight, or on the first opportunity, when there was a slack of trade, he would seize that opportunity.

3854. What manufacturers take the lead in reducing wages, those who pay the higher or the lower rate of wages?—Why, in answer to that I would say, that those manufactures who are continually reducing or continually taking the lead in reduction, spread ruin and misery and evil alike both to the manufacturers and operatives.

3855. Are those who are averse to reducing wages governed and controlled by those who are inclined to reduce wages?—Not exactly so; if they were, the whole four manufacturers would reduce equivalent to the one who does reduce; but instead of which they still have never taken off so low as he has, after the list has been wholly broke through, but in some articles they pay considerably more for the same article as he is paying considerably less for now. We sent to them five weeks yesterday; they gave us a declaration that they did not wish to reduce; and they are paying 6*d.* a piece now for some articles, and 1*s.* and 1*s.* 6*d.* for others; but while there is this spring demand, they pay this without taking anything out of the working, and, unless he sees he shall lose the hand, he comes up a little while, there is a demand for goods to be made, and as soon as the spring demand begins to be in a state of slackness, he seizes the opportunity to lower the price.

3856. Will other manufacturers be obliged to come down to his price?—Invariably; they will still be forced to come down lower unless he advances.

3857. Would it be a benefit to the manufacturers and weavers, if some plan could be devised that would improve the wages of the weaver, and make the rate of wages more uniform than it now is?—We believe it would be a benefit to the whole, inasmuch as the manufacturers who have hitherto paid better prices and those who are disposed to pay as little as they could below them, have expressed a wish not to depart from any engagement of prices, but would rather keep it on, and assert that there is no need to lower it; the operative would be benefited by receiving more for his work.

3858. What you call the honourable masters should have the power to regulate the wages rather than what you call the unprincipled masters?—That is desirable.

3859. Would you suggest any plan by which you would place the power in the hands of those officers to reduce the wages?—Long before we heard of Mr. Fielden's plan, we met from time to time, with a view to suggest something of that nature; and I, in 1829, told the magistrates that—(there was a strike in Nuneaton, through the whole district)—in fact, that if there was some protection given as a legislative enactment we should be a happy people, low or high, to what we were in the state of things then. They did not like to interfere, and they thought it was out of their control. Thus we have been led to go on, so that we are in the state of misery we now are in; we believe now that a great remedy would be procured, and benefit would accrue to the operative from the general establishment of trade, if there were a protection given to us by law.

3860. But what sort of protection do you want?—When I speak of protection, I am not asking for others to advance wages; I am speaking to represent the parishes that sent me, I conceive. We do not expect a high price for labour, but we should like protection when a price was fixed by agreement between a number of operatives and a number of their employers; we think if that was granted to them by legislative enactment, and the power to regulate that price from time to time, according to circumstances, they would keep on an even balance of selling with each other, confidence would be restored, and the trade established more on a steady foundation, and the trade progressively, under all circumstances, be bettered in its condition, both as it regarded the regular profits of the manufacturer and the steadiness of the wages received by the operatives; and it would render them contented, and restore harmony and peace.

3861. Have you any plan you think calculated to accomplish that end?—When we consulted together from time to time, and found there was no protection and assistance, we were always forced to yield to these adoptions that these men forced on us for want of protection; and having heard that your Committee and the Committee before the present were taking that into consideration, from our petitions, to inquire into our state, and discovering that Mr. Fielden had drawn up a plan,

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a plan, we embraced that, and we hope that if that or something equivalent to it could be procured to us, and become an enactment, it would at once set us at liberty, and that we should receive as a boon.

3862. You have seen that?—Yes.

3863. And studied it?—Yes, and I admire it; and I believe the whole of our parish round do; we think the clause at the bottom, that Mr. Fielden wishes to stand over, about making it a penalty if it were not abided by, would be an amend ment to it, if it could be passed.

3864. That there should be a penalty?—Yes, because we know that nothing less than punishment of the manufacturer who violated it, would keep him from the violation of it.

3865. Will you tell the Committee what you understand by Mr. Fielden's plan?—I understood, when I read a copy of it, that Mr. Fielden was examined before the Committee as to whether he could adopt any plan which he thought would be advisable to be laid before the House of Commons to endeavour to get it passed into a law; and I understood in reply to that, that he had sketched out a plan in the shape of an Act of Parliament, with a view to regulate the price of four articles of manufacture, linen, woollen, cotton and silk: and looking it through in all its bearings, we had a meeting on the subject; in fact, we have had three on that very Bill, at Nuneaton and Coulton, and we came to the determination to agree to that, and we should be proud if we could obtain it; my directions were to impress the necessity, as much as I could, on this Committee of inquiry, if they would be kind enough to pay attention to what little I might say, that we might get that or something like it; if you could bring it to be law, it would restore us to peace and prosperity in our low estate.

3866. Have the goodness to explain the plan, and mention the outline?—I cannot repeat the whole of it.

3867. Could true returns of the wages paid by the manufacturers in your district be obtained by inquiry of them and of their weavers?—Yes, I think it could.

3868. Could the probable quantity of goods of each sort made by every manufacturer be obtained in like manner?—We believe it could.

3869. Would it not be easy to select the least number of manufacturers given in such returns, who together make at least one-half of the goods of each sort in each parish or township where hand-loom weaving is carried on in your county?—We think it would.

3870. Would it not be easy to take the majority of one or two of those so selected, who are paying the highest rate of wages for each sort of goods?—Yes.

3871. The average wages having been so taken from a voluntary rate paid by many in the trade, could any just complaint be urged by any manufacturer against a law that required that no manufacturer, in each parish or township, should pay less wages than that average?—No just complaint could be urged, in our opinion, inasmuch as we conceive, what a majority of both agreed to, ought to rule over the minority.

3872. Would there afterwards be some inequality in wages, that is, would some manufacturers pay the average only, and some pay more than the average?—That we should have no control over, about paying more than the average, no more than we have now; no list and no protection whatever; but if they felt disposed to give more, we should receive it, but not make a demand beyond that.

3873. There is nothing in the plan to prevent their doing that?—No.

3874. If returns of wages and of goods manufactured were required by law periodically, and the average wages taken as before stated, would the practice cause a slow but certain rise in wages?—In reply to that, we believe it would better our condition, and probably would make some little advance regularly; I do not mean a progressive, continued advance, but we believe it would enable manufacturers to give us something more than they give us now; and if there was a greater demand for goods, there would be a call for manufacturers and weavers, if it allowed them, to meet and adopt an advance, which both mutually and friendly could agree to.

3875. Do you think one chief advantage of the plan would be, that if a certain number of manufacturers should be inclined to give a fair rate of wages, that an Act of Parliament would protect them in paying that rate of wages against the unprincipled manufacturers who are inclined to reduce wages?—Yes, we think so, on the ground inasmuch as the civil law should compel the person to suffer the penalty of the law who breaks it. If it passed into law, if a man felt disposed to ruin many thousands to advantage himself, whether manufacturers or operatives,

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we think that law ought to be applied against himself to prevent him; and if he had not a principle to be honest, there should be a law to compel him.

3876. Would such a process as that of Mr. Fielden's Bill create competition to pay liberal wages, and stay the competition now so much complained of?—We do not think it would reduce wages; I will state why; I will endeavour to show it you very simply: when we were receiving 1*s.* 6*d.* per piece more for making ribbons, the same ribbons we now make for 1*s.* 6*d.* a piece less; the ribbon is worth as much now we receive 1*s.* 6*d.* a piece less, having no list of protection, not even a list which a master will grant us; the ribbon is worth as much, receiving 1*s.* 6*d.* less for making it, as it was to us when we received 1*s.* 6*d.* more for making it. You will say, how do you know this? I say I will tell you very simply: if I have one piece of ribbon to sell to-day, or 500, and a buyer wanted it, he would give me as much for that as he did when I received 1*s.* 6*d.* a piece more for the labour of that; and that makes me assert that ribbon is as valuable, and that the money is put solely into the manufacturer's pocket, and that he derives these profits from it.

3877. Do you mean that ribbon is fetching the same price in the retail market as it did when you were receiving 1*s.* 6*d.* more wages?—I do.

3878. Therefore you think the reduction in your wages is unnecessary?—Yes; I will tell you why I believe it: if a buyer wanted to come to me instead of another ribbon manufacturer, I being an operative, I have a right, if I buy silk, if my master cannot employ me, to buy silk and keep my family from starving; I have a right, if I buy it honestly, to sell it to the best buyer; and to prove that, I would say that the buyer who bought it to-day of me, or any time this spring, would give me as much money for it as I should sell it for if I got 1*s.* 6*d.* a piece more from my master for making it; that proves it at once that my assertion is justified.

3879. If an Act were founded on Mr. Fielden's Bill, could it be easily evaded, do you think?—It would be evaded by some designing bad minded man, unless there was a proper punishment put on the man to prevent his breaking through it.

3880. You think a penalty should be attached to Mr. Fielden's Bill?—Yes; and I wish to speak fair on the subject. I would make it binding on the operative as well as the manufacturer, who should wish to violate anything of that that should be enacted.

3881. How long would you have this plan, this regulation of wages, in operation?—We think if it was to be regulated twice in the year it would work a benefit to us, as there are two seasons of the year when there is a brisker demand for goods than at other times.

3882. The plan proposed by Mr. Fielden establishes a minimum of wages; would you have that minimum established now, and in all future times would you have no power to go below that minimum?—When we speak of that, I am willing, as one, to say that if circumstances changed to cause the necessity for it, as operatives we ought to bow to it; but if there are no circumstances intervene to cause it, there can be no necessity in our judgment for it.

3883. Who is to determine when occasion shall arise for a reduction of the minimum?—An equal number of the operatives and manufacturers together, forming a local board.

3884. You would have a local board, in addition to Mr. Fielden's plan, to determine on the necessity of reducing that minimum, when such necessity arises?—Yes, of regulating the price according to the circumstances which influence other workmen, whatever they might be.

3885. That minimum of the local board would be binding for six months at least?—Yes.

3886. Would the power given by Mr. Fielden's plan for settling disputes by arbitration be sufficient?—We believe it would, on the ground as I understood it, if my memory serves me to repeat how I understood it; we conceive four persons, two of each, manufacturers and operatives, should be called on to settle that dispute, and what they agree to in their opinion in writing being just and honest, the magistrate should enforce the same to be abided by; if not, one referee should be called on, and what he in his judicial opinion agreed to should be binding in like manner. We think the magistrate, having full control over that, would at once settle the business.

3887. You are aware that Mr. Fielden's plan does not call on the magistrate, but merely a referee, appointed by the master of the weavers, to whom it is referred?—I understand, if two operatives and two manufacturers agreed on any dispute that

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should become a final agreement, and if one of the parties is not satisfied, that a magistrate should enforce the same.

3888. The plan is, if two weavers and two manufacturers do not agree, they take this third party to decide between them?—It appears to be in both cases left to a magistrate in the Bill, if I mistake not.

3889. Is there any other relief you would look to, besides this plan of Mr. Fielden's to regulate wages?—There is never another, we think, so essential to our general benefit.

3890. Have you heard any opinions expressed by the weaver from Coventry on the subject of the Corn Laws?—Yes, I did in part; in part I did not.

3891. Did you agree in those opinions?—I agree with what I heard; as to what I heard of it, it could have the effect; it touches on a different branch from our business.

3892. Do the weavers generally look to the repeal of the Corn Laws as the mode of relief?—We believe if the Corn Laws were repealed it would be another sort of relief, in addition to the present. I will endeavour to explain why, inasmuch as in the present state of things it appears that the foreign corn merchant cannot bring his corn here in with wind and tide, if I may use the expression, but must stop till he and the corn factor agree on the price, which is detrimental to the foreign corn merchant; and thus it prevents him from taking our merchandize and every description of merchandize on the one hand, and on the other it incurs an unnecessary expense while he is kept back from selling his corn; and again, the two bad effects of that cause are a stopping of that reciprocity we conceive would otherwise exist between us and the different civilized nations in the world, which would cause our merchandize of all descriptions to be more in demand, and would bring bread in still cheaper to us, and cause greater consumption. On that ground we believe the repeal of the Corn Laws would be a general acquisition, to the general advantage of the British empire, as it would bless the working population, and they being blessed would produce a blessing on all mankind.

3893. Did you hear the opinions expressed by the weavers from Coventry, that the weavers of Coventry had been injured by the introduction of foreign ribbons since 1824?—I did.

3894. Are you of opinion that the introduction of foreign corn would be injurious to the farmers of this country?—Perhaps, under the present state of things, some of them connected with it might; I do not know how to speak to that; I do not know how they have taken their lands; some farmers probably took a lease of their lands when corn was very high, and consequently took it at a high rent, and now corn is low, without the protection of the Corn Laws, they are in a ruinous situation. I conceive that as those are placed as they are, and have to pay a heavy rate, they cannot sell their corn for a low price.

3895. Are you aware that in the north of England particularly, that the letting of land is from year to year, not under a lease?—No.

3896. Are you aware that the land in your own neighbourhood is from year to year, and not under a lease?—I have not had the privilege or the blessing to know what it was to work on the soil, to produce my bread on the soil, as I wish I had land now, I should prefer it tenfold to weaving, and live on it happy.

3897. If the effect of the repeal of the Corn Laws would be to reduce the price of corn in this country so low that it could not be grown here without any rent at all, do you think that that would be any advantage to the weaver?—I do not think we shall ever be driven to that necessity.

3898. Are you aware that some land does not pay its expenses without any rent at all?—Probably there may be the rates on that land, and heavy taxation.

3899. But taking taxation into consideration, do you think it will be a benefit to the weaver to throw the farmers and agricultural labourers out of cultivation and employment?—No, I would not wish it, and in my opinion I do not think they would ever be driven to that necessity, as I conceive if it was a fair impartial free trade there would be an increase in the demand, and the British artizan or mechanic in every town, and all scientific knowledge, would be called into employ, and there would be a greater consumption; and though you might bring into the kingdom many thousand quarters of wheat, you would export British manufactures to that degree that would cause still as much wheat to be grown at home, and consume the foreign consumption of wheat brought to you besides. I conceive a full demand of the manufactures from the various parts of the manufacturing towns

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would so set alive, if I may use the expression, the wealth-producing classes, that it would ultimately restore social prosperity to the British empire.

3900. You think that the abolition of the Corn Laws would create such an export of British manufactures, as would enable the British people generally to consume a quantity of provisions more than equivalent to the increase of foreign importations?—I decidedly do; and I will state my reasons upon that point: I am aware that the agriculturist and the land-owners; pardon my being plain, I am a plain poor man, but wish to be honest; they are endeavouring to protect the land, and so they have a right to do; but in my notion of the thing they are not doing it, as far as my shallow conception of thinking goes, when I have read the public accounts, they do not seem to me to be endeavouring to do this on the best of plans; because, could they adopt any measure that they can hold out under the present existing system that would be a protection to the farmer, if that could be proved and established practically, it would benefit the landlord and the farmer alike; but while the manufacturers are crippled for want of the intercourse of the seas free, every effort that is made to protect the farmer proves abortive, for the manufacturer cannot receive the wages he would otherwise receive, on the one hand, and the agriculturist cannot receive from the manufacturer what he otherwise would do; and that is from want of protection to the manufacturers generally; on that ground, the farmer when he has produced every description of grain and butter and eggs and meat, cannot get such a price as he wishes to get; and like the poor distressed weaver, when he cannot make up his rents, sells his greens, and whatever he has, for what he can get, because they will not afford him what he would otherwise have.

3901. Do you think that the present payment gives no protection to the farmer, because it diminishes the consumption of agricultural produce among the English people, to a greater extent than foreign importation could possibly amount to?—Yes, than all the protection the Corn Laws can give.

3902. Your object in having a repeal of the Corn Laws, is to lower the prices of corn?—I think so; it would lower the price of corn.

3903. What would be your advantage if it did not?—It must be an advantage on the ground I have stated.

3904. Because you think it would extend our trade?—Yes, I am certain.

3905. Would it not be in the power of foreign countries to place an impediment in the way of our trade, by the establishment of prohibitory duties?—I do not think they would have recourse to that if they could obtain our British manufacture in return, because it would enable them to cultivate their own soil better on the one hand, and to obtain a variety of articles, which otherwise they would be in a state of starvation for want of.

3906. Is it not the fact, that prohibitory duties have grown up when they have received our manufactures?—I am not certain of that.

3907. Are you not aware that prohibitory duties have been established in Germany lately?—I am not certain as to that; if I knew they were, I should say they were; but if I was led myself to discover that, as you may be acquainted with me, I should know how to answer on what ground those duties were laid.

3908. Suppose they were laid to protect their own manufactures?—Yes, but perhaps I should discover it was because there was not a proper intercourse with us on the seas, free of access.

3909. Do you think an English workman generally, if he had money in his pockets, would consume double the quantity of provisions that they now consume?—I do not think about it, I am certain.

3910. You think the way to protect the agriculturist is to fill the hungry mouths of the people?—Yes.

3911. You think the present system of Corn Laws gives them no protection, because it closes the mouths of the people to a greater extent than it shuts out provisions?—I do not think it, I am still certain: suppose at Nuneaton market, or any other, the man is at work on the wages I have described, how is he likely, if he has a wife and four children, to live? He ought to have six pounds of meat a week. Ought he to have it that is the question.

3912. If by introducing foreign corn you are to deprive the farmers and farm-labourers of England of wearing any of the fabrics you weave, would that be a benefit to the weavers?—It is possible for a man to get six pounds of meat; I could not raise, honestly, six pounds in three weeks, and I do not have it the year round.

3913. How much would your family consume if you obtained the means of purchasing?—I have two sons and my wife, and if we had the means of purchasing it, we could eat at least six pounds of meat a week on the average, that would be but a pound and a half for the whole family: I am speaking of what I consider to be moderate; we should consume a pound and a half of butter per week, but we do not get it.

3914. Do not you think the same argument holds good on the other side, that if the farmer and farm-labourer were to have good prices and good wages, they would be able to consume more of the fabrics you weave?—Yes; a good deal more; in proportion as they are well fed, their spirits desire every fashion that is wanting.

3915. If by the introduction of foreign corn the British farmer and the farm-labourer receive worse prices and worse wages, would that help your condition?—I think it would never be brought into a state of necessity.

3916. If it could have that effect, might it not endanger your trade with them?—It would if it had; but I would show you it would have another effect: the man that works hard now, does not know how to get a coat once in seven years; he would get one every year; and the women and children are the same in their apparel.

3917. The same argument holds good with both parties?—Yes; the labourer is placed on the same footing with the weaver and my fellow sufferers; he would be bettered in his condition, he would be enabled to receive full as good wages and to replace his garment oftener; in this case there would be a consumption of our manufactures, which would cause a consumption of his produce and of the soil, and they would keep pace with each other, and have prosperity instead of struggling with each other from misery.

3918. You are both sailing in the same boat?—Yes.

3919. And if you could get back to the same state of employment and wages of labour as existed for the 10 years ending the war, should you be willing to pay the same price for the provisions of those years?—We should not only be willing, but do so, and be happier.

3920. You would live content?—Yes, growing out of plenty.

3921. You do not complain of the high price of provisions, except with reduced wages and reduced employment?—Yes.

3922. How are you to get an increase of wages?—From a regular demand for labour.

3923. Which is to make that, home or a foreign consumption?—Foreign consumption would be the first spring that would increase home consumption.

3924. You think the exportation of the manufactures for the produce of foreign grain, would make a vast increase of prosperity among the English, and enable them to consume English grain more than equivalent to foreign grain?—Yes.

3925. Have you not been able better to compete with France since the decline of prices in the last 14 years than before?—In what part?

3926. It was 100 *s.*, it is now 40 *s.*; are you not able better to compete with the foreign now it is low?—Our money would not increase.

3927. Have you been better able to compete with him since this great decline in the price of corn?—No, we are not better off in proportion.

3928. If the corn falls low, would you be better off?—Yes; in proportion as it falls so does the proportion of the wages of the people fall; if it were 1 *d.* a stone, and we were reduced to three farthings to get it, we should be more miserable.

3929. But the mere reduction of the price of provisions has not benefited your condition; the mere fact of provisions being progressively cheaper for that period of years has not increased your means of producing those provisions?—In reply to that, you see the reduction of bread has not bettered our condition; the reason is simply this, bread has been very cheap this season, cheaper than I ever recollected it. What is the result? when it falls 1 *s.* a stone, my wages are taken off 1 *s.* 6 *d.* a piece; it has left me 6 *d.* worse than it was.

3930. Do you mean for a series of years, while provisions have been falling, and the prices and taxes have been diminishing, your situation has been getting worse daily?—Yes; every movement I have made with industry has only worstened my condition.

3931. If you got back to the system many years ago, you would be content to pay the price of provisions with the taxes that existed those years ago?—Yes.

3932. What is the condition of the weavers of Nuneaton compared with those of

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of Coventry?—We think they stand on a worse ground than the weavers of Coventry, as the weavers of Nuneaton, and Colston and Alston, and other places, are employed in hand-loom weaving, making one ribbon with one shuttle alone. We have a superiority over the engine-weaver on the one hand; we can make some certain articles to more perfection than the engine-weaver can. The engine-weaver cannot make it at all. Instead of receiving what we used to receive, we receive so much less in proportion as we lay out more money to produce the fabric in its beauty and form. We used to receive reward for that where we produced beauty and form and fashion, but the men are curtailed in their wages; on the other hand, the engine-weaver has four, six, eight, ten, up to 20 prints making in one loom, by a spring shuttle that makes them at once, consequently they can get more money by making the same length of yards of all those breadths than we by making one.

3933. Do you consider that the existence of a list of prices at Coventry has any influence in placing the weavers of Coventry in a better condition than those at Nuneaton, and the country round about, which have not the protection of that list?—Certainly, if Coventry had the protection of that list, it would make them better, but if Nuneaton had not the same protection there would be a jar.

3934. You are aware a list does exist in Coventry?—Yes, in the engine-weavers, but not in the single-hand.

3935. Do you consider the existence of the list is an advantage in maintaining a superiority in the condition of the weavers of Coventry over Nuneaton and the country?—Yes, most certainly.

3936. Do you consider the want of the existence of a list of prices in the country, has a tendency to bring down the wages of Coventry?—Yes, positively; I consider a list of prices advantageous to both.

3937. You have stated you had a list of prices in common with the weavers of Coventry, till 1831; have not the manufacturers of Coventry, to a certain extent, adhered to that list since 1831, and have they not broken that list with the country weavers?—Wholly, last June they broke it, or the beginning of July.

3938. In the country?—It was partly broke then; in the country it is wholly broke, and they now give us what they please, and no more.

3939. It still exists in Coventry?—No, it has caused Coventry to reduce twice since then.

3940. You have given your opinion that it would be desirable to establish a board of trade for the regulation of wages; do you consider a board of trade, established at Coventry, would be sufficient to regulate the wages of the ribbon trade for Coventry, and the country round about?—If the country hands and Coventry are coupled in that, I think it will.

3941. That is where the description of work is so much alike, that the same management would apply to all equally?—Yes, if they have a share in the management of it; if they are not, I do not think it would.

3942. As to power-looms, you mean them not to be worked by steam, but Jacquard looms?—No, I mean by steam.

3943. What you call the engine?—No.

3944. Are ribbons woven by power-looms in your county?—No.

3945. Where are they woven so as to interfere with you by power-looms?—We conceive that Derby and Manchester interfere with us and with the city too; they make a great portion of the black trade that used to be made in Coventry and Nuneaton, both in engine-looms and single-hand looms; the single-hand looms used to make broad ribbons in black, and the engine made the narrow ones; then that part of the trade belonged both to the country and the city of Coventry, but that appears to be taken away.

3946. You stated that the introduction of the free trade in 1826 had affected you; to what extent has it caused the reduction of the wages of the weavers?—I should think from then till now it would be brought from 30 to 50 per cent. in some cases.

3947. Do you think any penalty would prevent a starving workman who could not get employment with full wages, offering his labour at reduced wages?—Yes, I think it would; for our trade is rather singular from the general body of manufacturers, it being generally operated upon by fancy or fashion, inasmuch, as when we had regulation of prices of wages, we had as much work to do as if we had worked for as little again; it is not lowering the wages that causes us more employment.

3948. Supposing the prices of ribbons should rise largely and permanently, would you think it possible to keep down the present rate of wages?—It would be impossible; the same local board would enable us to rise and fall, according to the circumstances.

3949. Would not the natural process of competition between the masters create a rise of wages if they found a rise of profits?—If that was the case, the manufacturer would have it partly in his judgment and in his power to make the regulation keep pace with the circumstance.

3950. You are decidedly of opinion, if all the workmen in England could have their wages raised, they would be the best customers for the agriculturists of England?—There is not a doubt of it.

3951. Do you see the means of raising the wages, (the quantity of things being the same as they are,) without having more money?—I do not know how to answer that question in full; I think it might be answered in effect by this change of the currency; it seems to have crippled all the energies of all the nation.

3952. The change of the currency, you think, caused a reduction of wages?—All those things together combine in effect; there is a national ruin in the midst of plenty apparently.

3953. The Nuneaton weavers constitute one-third of the population?—I think, dependent on the trade and working in it, I think full nine-tenths of it.

3954. Are employed in weaving?—Yes.

3955. Have they been so for many years back?—Yes.

3956. Were they so when they had double the wages they now have?—According to the population of the place; it is the staple business of the place, and that advances according to the increase of that population.

3957. Are those nine-tenths of this population producing more or fewer goods than they did when they got double the price for weaving?—I believe more goods are produced, and they have less money for them.

3958. What advantage could you expect to derive from an increase of production, unless you could at the same time have an increase in the prices?—We conceive a regular foreign trade with corn would produce a regular foreign trade for all the British manufactures, and this would cause a general revival of trade, which would produce an advance of price on the other as an effect.

3959. How is the price to be advanced, with the increase in the quantity of corn and the increase in the quantity of manufactures, without having more money to measure it with?—I cannot answer that question as to the money; I know there must be more money employed to increase more manufactures and agricultural labour.

3960. Supposing the quantity of money to remain the same, and the corn increased, and the manufactures and every other thing increased, would not the prices naturally fall?—As to that, that is a question I am not prepared fully to answer; I am not fully acquainted with how far the little sum of money would execute the power you appear to want double the sum of money to execute.

3961. To bring it within the scope of your understanding, suppose there is 100 *l.* to measure 33 loads of oatmeal, and the money remained the same, and the meal doubled, must not you give half the price of the meal you did before?—Not without money to increase it, to enable a person to turn round on the revival principle, to enable them to manufacture that on the one hand, and to consume a portion of the food on the other.

3962. You could not double the price without having double the quantity of money?—No.

3963. How do you make it out you could get a better price by increasing the quantity of foreign corn, if there were importation of foreign corn, and at the same time increase the quantity of British manufactures; how do you make out that you could get a better price, supposing the money the same in quantity?—I do not think it can be effected, for want of the money to set it afloat.

3964. How could the weavers be benefited by a course of that sort?—The weavers cannot be benefited by a course of that sort, for it cannot be effected without the means, and it must have the money at first to set it at work.

3965. Have you stated that your manufactures are more now than when you had double the price?—Yes.

3966. Then it is not from the want of having the same employment you had, but your miseries arise from the reduction in the wages you receive; because you get a less command of the necessaries of life than you had before?—Yes.

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3967. Do not you know that there are a great many exchanges where there is no money at all?—Yes.

3968. Suppose you were to go to a country that produces corn, and wanted clothes, and you wanted corn and did not want clothes; that you made the exchange of one cargo for another; without the use of money, you could do that?—To a certain extent.

3969. You have read in former times money was not used for interchanges, yet a great many bargains were made?—I have not read of those things; I read very little.

3970. You perhaps may know many nations have no money at all?—I do not know.

3971. Did you ever hear of any other nation than this, that had 800,000,000 *l.* of national debt?—No.

3972. Do you think it could be contracted without money?—No.

3973. Do you know how many looms there are at Nuneaton?—I cannot answer directly; they have got a statement in the town.

3974. You have stated that the retail prices of provisions, although they have fallen, that fall has not been attended with a corresponding fall of rents of cottages and lands, and many other expenses; and therefore you think that the workmen are still much injured?—Yes, in fact it explains itself; if a man is working for 3 *s.*, 4 *s.* or 5 *s.* a week, and his rent is raised to 5 *l.* a year, and from that to 7 *l.* when he got better wages; it remained 6 *l.* 10 *s.*; now his rent is as high as his wages are low.

3975. You are of opinion that if we go on permanently to low prices in provisions, still the workman, unless his wages rise, will not be in so good a situation as 20 years ago?—I am sure he will not; the more we do the worse we get.

3976. What is your opinion as to the effect of foreign competition of French ribbons; what effect may it have had on your manufacture in the quality; do you think foreign competition has improved or deteriorated, or affected in any degree the productions with which you are acquainted?—Materially so.

3977. In consequence of that introduction?—We conceive so, as we had not that to compete with previous to its coming; but after its coming we have to imitate, and I believe that none but us could see the difference; we who had ribbons made in the French machine, and made by the same French machine in Nuneaton and elsewhere; it is only those who knew it.

Charles Hood, called in; and Examined.

Charles Hood.

3978. WHAT is your object in appearing here to-day?—At the request of some respectable gentlemen at Nuneaton, who wished me to come with Mr. Shaw, not with a view to put the Committee to the least expense, thinking I might have been of some service; and he wished me to come up with him, to give any information I thought proper as to the state of the trade, to show the effect the distress has had on the parish.

3979. Mr. Shaw having been selected by the weavers, the respectable inhabitants of Nuneaton wished you to come and supply any deficiency?—Yes.

3980. Have you heard the evidence given by him?—Yes.

3981. Have you any thing to supply to what he stated?—Yes; the parish of Nuneaton is in as bad a state as ever it was in the very worst times.

3982. Those who are not actually engaged in weaving?—Yes, as well as the weavers.

3983. You speak mainly as to effect in the parish of Nuneaton, produced by the depression among the hand-loom weavers in the neighbourhood?—Yes.

3984. You conceive that the depression is as low as it can possibly be?—It is in a very bad state indeed.

3985. How many persons are there in your parish on the poor-rates?—They authorise me to say, as near to the statements as we delivered in before as possible; I think we had 3,200 and odd.

3986. Now on the books receiving relief?—Yes; the population is 8,000, within a very few.

3987. How much are the poor-rates in the pound?—Nine levies, two or three of them 1 *s.* 6 *d.* ones.

3988. Then you think 12 *s.* or 13 *s.* in the pound?—Yes.

3989. On the rack-rent, or two-thirds?—on the whole rates of the parish.

3990. Are

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3990. Are they rated at full rent?—No, I think moderately rated.
3991. Is the whole population in an equally distressed state as the hand-loom weavers?—Nearly the whole of the population depend on the hand-loom weaving; there are not more I should think than three or fourscore engine-looms going on.
3992. Have you any agricultural population?—Yes, but nothing in proportion.
3993. Are they worse off?—They are in a very bad state, many of them will be ruined.
3994. Are wages obtained by agricultural labourers more than those obtained by the weavers?—I am not aware what they obtain, but it is very small indeed.
3995. Is the proportion received from the poor-rates greater arising from the hand-loom weaver than agriculturist?—Yes, greater certainly, for there are very few of those in proportion to the weavers.
3996. There are 8,000 inhabitants, and 6,000 inhabitants depend on the hand-loom weavers?—Yes, I think there is; I think we employ between 5,000 and 6,000 in the whole.
3997. The shopkeepers, and all the persons in all the branches of the trade, and all except the farmers?—Almost the whole of the population depend on the trade.
3998. Did you ever know them worse off?—I do not know that ever I did; I have known them shorter of work.
3999. Has there been any improvements in buildings and houses lately?—No, very little; bricklayers and carpenters, and all descriptions of trade are very bad.
4000. How many uninhabited houses are there at Nuneaton?—I do not know; there are a great many.
4001. Have you any further statement to make?—No, I have not.

Mercurii, 15° die Aprilis, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. *James Jenkins*, called in; and Examined.

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4002. WHEN were you summoned for?—For Tuesday; yesterday.
4003. What was the reason you did not appear?—The place I had taken in the coach I could not have.
4004. On what account?—On account of it being occupied by convicts.
4005. Where do you reside?—Coventry.
4006. Are you a manufacturer?—I am.
4007. In what branch of the trade?—The plain ribbon branch.
4008. Do you employ a considerable number of hand-loom weavers?—I employ a good many.
4009. How many?—Not so many now as I have done formerly, not more than 50 now.
4010. How were you selected to come here?—By a meeting being called of the manufacturers, who thought I could give the Committee the best information.
4011. Were you chosen to come here in reference to any opinion you hold upon Mr. Fielden's Bill for the regulation of wages?—Yes; the object was mentioned, and a copy of the proposed Bill was sent down, and it was mentioned if some person was sent whose opinions were adverse, it would be preferable to the Committee.
4012. And you are sent up as holding those opinions?—I was not sent up on that account, but my selection was thought better on that account.
4013. What was the largest number of hand-loom weavers you ever had?—Four hundred.
4014. Since when have you begun to diminish that number?—I began to diminish it several years ago.
4015. What was the number you had two years ago?—Two hundred and fifty.
4016. What caused you so suddenly to diminish the number?—I failed in business this last year.
4017. Do you employ power now?—No.
4018. Are they engine-looms?—Yes, engine-looms.
4019. Then you have reduced the number of your weavers and your concern altogether, without having commenced any other branch of business?—Yes.
4020. Have you any objection to state why your concern turned out so ill?—No;

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No; I should have no objection in the world, if it would give you satisfaction; I have always paid it the greatest attention, and used all those means generally thought necessary for the success of business; and I think I ought to have succeeded.

4021. Did it arise from any great losses in your trade?—Yes, I made a very great loss just before I failed.

4022. That was the cause?—Yes.

4023. What is the state of the hand-loom weavers generally in the neighbourhood of Coventry?—At this moment that portion working in engine-looms are very well off; but that portion that work at single-hand-looms are paid very low.

4024. What do you mean exactly by being well off; what average earnings do you consider to be well off for the weaver?—They have now full employment, which is a material point; they can earn from 10 *s.* to 30 *s.* or 40 *s.* a week.

4025. Each person?—Yes.

4026. How long have they been able to earn those wages?—When fully employed they have been able to earn those wages for many years past.

4027. Has that full employment continued for any length of time together?—The employment has never been so good for many years as it is at present; it has not usually continued for the whole year, very seldom.

4028. When did this brisker state of the trade commence that now exists?—Quite recently.

4029. Within the last two months?—Yes, within that time certainly.

4030. Within the last month?—Yes, about a month.

4031. Is there not generally a brisk demand towards spring?—Yes, there is, but I think this is better than former springs.

4032. Do you attribute the briskness this year to any particular cause?—I conjecture that it is owing to the suspension of business for some time past, which suspension I suppose was caused by the rise in the material preventing the manufacturers manufacturing.

4033. Has there been an increased price from a reduction of stock?—Yes, there has.

4034. Do you attribute any of the increase of briskness to the change of fashion?—No, I do not.

4035. Have not narrow ribbons come into fashion, which has brought the narrow weaver into employment?—Yes; that is only a change of trade, not an increase.

4036. Are not narrow ribbons worn now where no ribbons were worn before, for caps under bonnets?—Yes; but on the other hand, broad ribbons are not worn that used to be.

4037. They were not worn under bonnets?—No; but though I have made ribbons for so many years, I scarcely know how they are used; but it is obvious many of those ribbons referred to are used for a fresh purpose.

4038. Therefore the demand for those ribbons does not necessarily put out of demand those formerly made?—No; but I thought a fresh purpose was mentioned: broad ribbons were always worn for caps many years past.

4039. Not in the hair?—I am scarcely aware that they are used for that.

4040. How many engine-looms are there in Coventry?—I cannot say, not to give any general information; but in the statistics of the empire I think there is the information.

4041. You do not know of your own knowledge?—No, the manufacturers have no means of ascertaining.

4042. Have there been any turns-out?—Yes.

4043. Have they not taken an account of the number of looms?—Not recently.

4044. There was a Parliamentary Return in 1818?—I was not aware of it.

4045. Are there more or less than there were in 1818?—Considerably more.

4046. Do you think that the condition of the hand-loom weavers in Coventry is better or worse since the change of the law as to the introduction of foreign silk in 1824?—They are rather lower paid.

4047. Are you aware of the evidence that was given in 1818 as to the rate of wages paid in Coventry?—I have seen it.

4048. Are you aware that the testimony then was that the average gains of the hand-loom weavers did not exceed 5 *s.* 6 *d.* a week, in which both master and man concurred?—In some years there has been an extraordinary depression of wages: in 1818 there was one; in 1819 there was a list formed, and in that year it was not so low.

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4049. The highest wages given for the average rate of engine-loom weaving was stated by the weavers to be under 10*s.*?—I believe it was under stated: there is a strong feeling upon the subject always exhibited.

4050. Taking your impression generally, do you think that the state of the hand-loom weaver was better or worse before 1824 or since 1824?—Better since.

4051. Do you mean that they earn more per week since 1824?—Yes, from the circumstance of Jacquard-loom being introduced, that affords high wages.

4052. Do you think they are able now to command as many of the necessaries and comforts of life as before 1824?—Yes.

4053. And they are as contented in their situation?—Yes.

4054. Was not the price of corn at 70*s.* in 1818?—I do not know.

4055. Do you apply your observation to the single-hand weaver?—No; I apply it to the whole: the single-hand weavers I think are worse off than ever.

4056. When did they begin to be worse off than the engine-weavers?—Their situation has gradually become worse.

4057. Used not the situation of the single-hand weavers to be considered superior to the engine-weavers, as they were accustomed to work up a superior fabric?—It is considerably worse now.

4058. Used it not to be considered better?—No, never.

4059. Was not a single-hand weaver employed upon a fabric that the engine weaver could not be employed upon?—Yes; at one time they could make figures in single-hand-looms and not in engine-looms.

4060. Did they not receive wages in proportion to the difficulty of the fabric?—No, I think not.

4061. Was not there a list of prices, concurred in both by the manufacturers and the weavers, up to 1831?—No, not invariably; in 1831 there was a list formed.

4062. Has there not been a list continuing from time to time, with certain modifications, for a great number of years?—Certainly, observed with greater or less strictness.

4063. Is it not the fact that it exists in the engine branch, and not in the single-hand branch?—Yes, with greater strictness in the engine branch.

4064. Does it exist at all in the single-hand branch?—It can scarcely be said to have any existence.

4065. Are you aware whether the single-hand weavers attribute the declension of their trade to the existence of a table of wages in the engine branch and the non-existence of it in their own branch?—Yes, I expect that they will; I cannot say I know their opinion.

4066. If they think so, do you consider it to be a true or erroneous opinion?—I think that their situation is worse, inasmuch as they get lower wages.

4067. If they think that their worse condition is owing to the list of prices existing in the engine branch and not in theirs, do you think that is erroneous?—There is no more a list in the one than the other that is legal.

4068. Whether it be legal or not, if it exists in the one and not in the other, do you think that the single-hand-loom weavers are right in their conclusion, whether the list was tacitly or voluntarily adhered to or not?—No, I should say not; their situation is worse, because there is not the same demand for their labour.

4069. Why do you think so?—Because the engine-loom has superseded their work.

4070. How long has the engine-loom been in existence?—It was not used for many articles 20 or 30 years ago; it was only used for narrow-widths at that time.

4071. Can the engine-loom now work up the figured ribbons?—They can make better figures in the engine-loom now than they can in the single-hand-looms.

4072. Do the weavers complain of the competition of the engine-loom?—Not now, deeming it useless to complain; they cannot prevent its operation.

4073. Do not the weavers complain?—They do not actually complain, to my knowledge.

4074. Do you not think they would, if they thought that the engine-loom was the cause of their destitution?—They may complain for anything I know; but it is so settled a point that the working of that loom shall go on, that they do not speak upon the subject.

4075. Does the power-loom come into competition with the single-hand-loom?—With the engine-loom it does; those power-looms in the other parts of the country.

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4076. Do the weavers complain of the effect of the power-loom?—Yes.

4077. Why do they object to that and not to the engine-loom?—They have been familiarized to the one and not to the other.

4078. You think, and the fact is, that the engine-loom is engaged in working up the same fabric as the single-hand branch, and that the engine, as the superior machinery, will drive the other out of the market?—Almost entirely.

4079. Have the wages of the weavers been often reduced, during your experience, upon the same sort of work?—They have been reduced since 1819, 20 or 30 per cent.

4080. Is there any difference in the wages now paid by the manufacturers of Coventry?—Yes.

4081. Some paying a higher rate for the same work and some a lower?—Yes.

4082. When wages have been reduced, do the manufacturers generally approve of the reduction?—Generally not.

4083. Can a small number of manufacturers in your district, by making a reduction of wages, cause that reduction to be general?—Only when there is a want of demand.

4084. If wages have been reduced gradually since 1819, and the process has been going on of certain manufacturers in the trade reducing wages, does not that argue that there has been an absence of demand since 1819?—There is a want of demand in proportion to the labour supplied, but the absolute demand is greater.

4085. Are there more people engaged in the Coventry trade compared with the population than there used to be?—I think there must be; but I cannot answer positively.

4086. The absolute number of weavers is increased?—Yes, the actual number; and I have reason for thinking that they are increased in comparison with the population, on this account, that almost every weaver brings up his child to his own trade, and takes many apprentices from other trades.

4087. If the reduction in wages is disapproved of by manufacturers, and the reduction only becomes general when there is an absence of demand, if there has been a gradual reduction since 1819, does not that argue a general absence of demand for the fabric you work up?—No; there is a large portion of the trade of Coventry that has gone to Derby and Congleton; the very considerable branch of demand that exists in other places is a demand upon us also, and it would be supplied by us if we could do it as well.

4088. Has the number of weavers in Coventry increased as the trade has departed to Congleton and Derby?—Yes, the number has increased.

4089. You say apprentices come from other trades?—Yes.

4090. Is that because the wages of the silk trade are higher than the wages paid by other trades?—I believe so.

4091. Do either those who first reduce or those who follow their example derive any benefit by such a course?—They obtain a sale, which otherwise they would not have at all.

4092. What manufacturers take the lead in reducing wages, those paying the lower or those paying the higher rate?—There are no particular manufacturers who can be said to have taken the lead.

4093. Each manufacturer gets his work done as well and as cheaply as he can?—He has not done so till recently; that feeling seems arising among them.

4094. He has not got his work done as cheaply and as well as he could?—No; he was restrained by the list of prices; there is an opinion prevails that their interest is not served by the reduction.

4095. Would it be a benefit to the manufacturers if some plan was devised to raise wages and make the trade more uniform than it now is?—I think not; an attempt was made upon a very complete scale, in 1831, to fix a settled rate of wages, and it was so effectual that no legislative enactment could have been better attended to than it was.

4096. You mean to say that the organization was complete?—Yes.

4097. There was no law binding those regulations upon all the trade?—No.

4098. Why did that regulation fail?—I will describe to the Committee the machinery of it, if I may so call it. It had been complained of, when lists were formed, they were not abided by scarcely a week after their formation. In 1831 the manufacturers were called together, and agreed to a list. At that time I was favourable to the principle of a minimum list, and knowing we could not expect a greater continuance of that list than had been experienced upon former occasions,

I proposed

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I proposed the appointment of a permanent committee, whose office was described to be to watch over the interests of the trade; but whose almost sole business was to watch the list of prices. They met monthly, and elected from their body, by turns, a sub-committee, whose business it was to wait upon individual manufacturers who departed from the list. Generally speaking the departure arose from misunderstanding: a particular manufacturer would fancy that somebody else was getting an advantage over him; and it was conceived and found to be true, in fact, that the individual who departed, if expostulated with, would return to the original list. This sort of machinery was effectual in preserving that list more than a year, perhaps two; but by that time it was found impossible to continue it any longer, and I came to a very decided opinion on my own part, that, even if it could be continued, it was against the interest of the workpeople themselves.

4099. Will you state why?—I conceive that they had by the continuance of that list injured the trade of Coventry very materially, though when I entered into that association it was with the understanding that if any necessity could be shown for a reduction, that the association would enforce one as far as they could; but when the occasion arose, they did not. A representation was made to them by myself, that the prices paid at Congleton were so low as already to have taken away the entire black sarsnet trade, and that they were now commencing making coloured sarsnets, which threatened to take away that trade also.

4100. Was that the reason why you think it operated against the weavers of Coventry?—I will state another case. In point of fact they had, by the continuance of the list, lost a considerable part of their trade, and were threatened with the loss of a further part; but the existence of that list has prevented us making a great many fancy goods that have been made in France. I feel no doubt that a large part of those ribbons that have been imported from France might, by the reduction of the list that would have allowed a man 20 *s.* a week, have been made in Coventry, and my proof is this: there is a manufacturer in Coventry, who, to avoid the operation of the list, adopted a new plan of paying his people; he placed two persons to do the work usually done by one, those two individuals taking two different parts of the work; to one of those individuals he gave 12 *s.* a week, and to the other a price, according to the quantity he did; that is, to the weaver he paid a price according to the quantity produced. That person's work did not cost him more than half what the work of the other manufacturers cost as regards wages, and his weaver got about 20 *s.* a week.

4101. Was it any particular fancy article, which nobody could produce but this manufacturer?—Not at all.

4102. Do you state that as a fact, that any considerable number of individual weavers have the power of earning 20 *s.* a week in Coventry?—There is work for thousands, in my opinion.

4103. You believe there is work for thousands at those wages?—Yes; but do not let me be understood as meaning many thousands; one or two thousand.

4104. Can you state as a fact that there are 500 hands receiving those wages at the present moment?—A man may be receiving less than he might receive if he paid more attention to his work: one peculiarity of the system I alluded to was that it enforced full attendance from the men; two persons were employed in each loom; if one was absent the other could not go on, and therefore strict attendance was enforced, and these men got 20 *s.* a week, and consequently more than 500, even 1,000 or 2,000 could get greater wages than that.

4105. Do you mean to accuse the weavers of Coventry of want of prudence and attention to their business, and want of industry?—Their not getting more wages is sometimes owing to their want of employment; they wait for their warps.

4106. Would not that subtract from the 20 *s.* a week?—Yes; but our figure weavers, who are best paid, have not upon an average been employed half the year; but in France they are better employed and more fully than the plain weavers.

4107. Did you not state there was more labour than there was a demand for in Coventry?—Yes, though the prices sometimes can be afforded.

4108. Is there an over-production of goods in consequence?—Yes.

4109. If those men were to work such long hours as would enable them to get 20 *s.* a week, would not that tend to increase the quantity of goods and reduce their wages?—If it was accompanied by a reduction of wages, there would not be an over-production of goods.

4110. Do you include the time occupied in setting the loom or forming the pattern

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tern in the loom, or the time that the weaver is occupied in weaving, when you say that he could get 20 *s.* a week?—I include the whole.

4111. What do you mean by saying, if there was reduction of wages there would be no over-production of goods?—I said, if there was a reduction in the wages, we could produce goods that are now imported.

4112. Have not the wages decreased of late years?—Different in degree in different branches; there has been a considerable reduction in the Jacquard branch since its introduction in 1825, and that is the branch I allude to as still receiving the highest wages.

4113. Did you not state that the list operated against your reducing wages?—Yes, I did, certainly.

4114. And yet you think the weavers will be better off if the lists were done away with?—I am entirely of that opinion.

4115. For what reason do you think that?—It would give them greater employment.

4116. From what source?—From the source I have described; the superseding goods imported.

4117. You think that a less quantity would be imported?—Yes.

4118. And a greater quantity exported?—Yes; but I look principally to the less quantity imported.

4119. You think that the weavers in this country are worse off by the greater freedom of importation, by the alteration of the law in 1824?—Yes, that has subjected them to the reduction of wages.

4120. Is it desirable that a power to regulate wages should be possessed by those manufacturers who are averse to reduce wages?—Decidedly not.

4121. Do you think it better in the hands of those who wish to reduce?—It should be left to the supply and the demand.

4122. You say that the list of 1831 failed?—Yes.

4123. Do you think it would have failed if there had been any legal enactment to make it binding on all parties?—Yes.

4124. If a penalty had been attached to the breach of it?—Yes.

4125. State the reasons for that opinion?—There were some very important evasions took place; one that readily presented itself was, for the workman to purchase the material and work for himself; the amount required for that would be very small for a single-hand weaver, and that was done to a very considerable extent: those goods brought to the market could not be said to be subjected to the list price; they would in time exclude all other goods, and would eventually leave the weaver in a worse situation than if he was allowed to take wages at the best price from the manufacturer, for there would be greater waste in the manufacture; he could not purchase the precise quantity of silk required, there would be a little over, or perhaps a little less, and that would spoil the article, so that his situation would not be better than it was before.

4126. You have stated that the weaver becomes in a manner a small manufacturer by buying the silk himself?—Yes, and weaving it by his own family generally.

4127. Is it generally considered that the weaver is in a condition to purchase silk and become a manufacturer?—The fact is proved.

4128. Can a weaver who can only buy a small quantity at a time, buy with equal advantage to a large manufacturer?—No.

4129. How then can the weavers work it up to greater advantage?—Because the manufacturer being obliged to pay by the list, was subjected to unfair competition.

4130. You think that would not be more than overbalanced by the advantages with which he buys his silk?—Certainly not.

4131. You say that the weaver, in consequence of the existence of the list, would have recourse to the making of his own goods?—Yes.

4132. If he has any advantage in making his own goods, it would be because he would get something more by those goods than he could by weaving at the list prices, or he would naturally continue to work at the manufacturers' prices?—No. The reason is, because he can get more regular employment; he will never work for himself when he can get employment from the manufacturers.

4133. The manufacturers work by the list?—Yes.

4134. The manufacturers brought down the list whenever they could not compete with other manufacturers in the foreign or home market, did they not?—No.

4135. They had the power?—Yes, but did not exercise it.

4136. When they had the power of bringing down the list prices, did they continue that list at a higher rate than they could sell their goods at a profit from the produce of that list?—They have done so.

4137. If they came into the market with goods produced on lower terms, it must necessarily have led to a reduction of wages?—It would naturally; but Coventry was not in a natural state when that list was formed.

4138. Do you mean to say, if a list of prices existed in Coventry now, made with the concurrence of the majority of manufacturers, and if that list was higher than they could compete with other districts manufacturing the same goods, do you mean to say that the manufacturers of Coventry would stop the trade and let it go from them rather than alter the prices?—They have done so, but I think a different feeling has arisen. I could name a memorable instance on that point, that has occurred in the year past. At the time the weavers were very badly employed, a representation was made that the black sarsnet trade had left us and gone to Congleton, Derby and other places; it was stated by a reduction a portion of this trade could be got back again: the manufacturers knew they had lost it and admitted it, but they would not sanction the reduction.

4139. Was not there a turn-out at Coventry about two months ago, in consequence of a departure from the list by three or four manufacturers?—Yes.

4140. What was the number of departures from the list?—I do not know; not many.

4141. Did you see the printed paper which was circulated in Coventry, giving an opinion upon the departure from the list by a great number of the principal manufacturers at Coventry?—I did.

4142. Did they not state in substance, nearly the whole of them, that there was no necessity whatever for departing from that list?—That paper said so.

4143. Did not that express the opinion given by the manufacturers?—I can scarcely believe it, because they did not act upon it.

4144. Did you hear any of the manufacturers say that the statement in that paper was incorrect?—No, I have not heard them say that; I have not conversed upon the point.

4145. Would you not infer from the manufacturers of Coventry adopting the list of prices, that it is their opinion that they can compete with any other manufacturers by adhering to that list, when they say there is no necessity for it?—No, I do not infer that.

4146. Then you must infer they do not understand their interests?—They have acted contrary to it.

4147. You say there was no obstacle to this list established in 1831; that it was as binding as if established by legal enactment, and that the only objection to it was that it drove the trade to Congleton and Derby?—That was the objection, certainly.

4148. You do not object to the plan because it is not practicable, because you say if any manufacturer deviated from the list for a short time, when it was discovered, he voluntarily came back to it?—Yes.

4149. Supposing the same sort of list was to exist in Congleton and Derby that exists at Coventry, would that list have the effect of driving the trade from Congleton and Derby?—Yes.

4150. Your objection to the plan would be, that it should be confined to a particular district, and the objection would not be so great if it was general?—The objection would not be so great.

4151. It would have an effect upon the general market?—It would drive the trade to other countries.

4152. And increase the importations?—Yes.

4153. Do you conceive that importations would take place to any extent of the goods alluded to, if the duties now imposed were sufficiently guarded?—There has been a considerable importation of French goods; but I am told that it is diminishing, but I cannot speak from my own knowledge.

4154. Is there much smuggling takes place?—It is said so.

4155. Do you think that true returns of the wages paid by the manufacturers at Coventry could be obtained, by inquiry of them and their weavers?—Yes.

4156. Could the probable quantities of each sort of goods made by each manufacturer be obtained in like manner?—A legal enactment could do anything, but it would be very objectionable to the manufacturers.

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4157. Would it be practicable or not?—Practicable.

4158. It is matter of opinion whether it would be objectionable?—I have heard opinions to that effect.

4159. You said a legal enactment might do anything; would it oblige the manufacturer to pay a higher rate of wages than would give him a profit; would he not rather leave the trade?—It could oblige him; but it would ruin him.

4160. Would a legal enactment induce the workman to accept a lower rate of wages, if he could get a higher?—No.

4161. Does it follow that a man leaves a trade when he finds it impossible to carry it on to a profit?—Not always.

4162. Would it not be easy to select from the number of manufacturers given in that return, those who at least made half the goods manufactured in any parish or township where hand-loom weaving is carried on?—Yes.

4163. Would it not be easy to take the majority of one or two out of those so selected, paying the highest rate of wages for each sort of goods?—Yes.

4164. Would it not be also easy to determine the average wages paid by the majority for such sort of goods?—The wages they paid might be returned.

4165. The average wages having been so taken from the voluntary rate paid by the majority in the trade, could any just complaint be urged by any manufacturer against the law that required that no manufacturer in each parish or township should pay less wages than that average?—Yes, I believe very considerable objections may be taken.

4166. State them?—If the price were more than what is paid in some other part of the kingdom, that would be one objection.

4167. If the rate was general throughout the kingdom?—If the rate was general throughout the kingdom.

4168. If the same plan existed generally?—If the prices were different in different parts of the kingdom, the place that was compelled to pay high would be injured and have a right to complain.

4169. If the regulation, now alluded to, of the list of prices, existed throughout the country, the objection would be diminished?—It would be diminished; but those places at the greatest distance from the market would have most right to complain; they could not enter into competition with those living at the market.

4170. Have not those living at a distance from the market, generally speaking, cheaper provisions?—That is no advantage to the master that pays by the piece.

4171. Wherever provisions are cheap, the weaver can afford to work at a less rate?—Yes.

4172. Supposing that rate is fixed in each district according to the necessities of the district?—Then the objection would be, that if a place at this moment is paying higher than another place, it compels you to continue the disadvantage at the present moment; it might happen that the place paying highest had not had its interest injured sufficiently to induce it to make the alteration, but in time, that place paying lowest would absorb all the business, and then the highest paying place would have a right to complain.

4173. Do you not think that the place paying the highest wages would draw to that place people from other parts?—If plenty of work was to be had; but if there was little work, the place paying lowest would draw the workmen.

4174. Are you not an advocate of free trade?—Yes.

4175. If so, will not the place paying the lowest draw to it the greatest number of hands?—When there is a deficiency of demand it will.

4176. Does your objection to the enactment of a plan of this kind spring from your opinion that there is a want of demand?—There will be occasionally in every trade a want of demand.

4177. There would be no difference between foreign and home competition, if in another part of the country they could produce cheaper than you?—No, certainly not.

4178. They have already established prices among themselves in districts, and the question put to you was, whether the prices that had been voluntarily established by the different manufacturers in the different districts, if the average paid by the majority of those making the largest quantity of goods was fixed as the minimum, whether any party could with propriety complain of it?—Certainly; at this moment he might be able to pay the high price, but at a future time he might be brought into competition with the low-paying manufacturer, and then if he could not meet him, he would have a right to complain.

4179. Would

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4179. Would not the operation be, to bring up the low-paying master in any district to the high-paying master?—No, a diminution of the demand on the latter.

4180. Would not the operation of such a law be, to bring up the low-paying masters in the district where the high-paying masters have to compete with them?—No; and I say that anything that impedes the freedom of his operations, he would have a right to complain of.

4181. Have you not just stated that the trade of Coventry has been injured by the competition with Congleton and Derby?—Yes.

4182. Because they pay lower wages than at Coventry?—Yes.

4183. If the wages paid at both places were now established by law as the minimum, would not the effect be to bring up the prices at Derby and Congleton to those at Coventry?—Yes.

4184. Just in the same way that the Coventry manufacturers have to complain of paying higher wages, from the low wages established, at Derby and Congleton?—Yes.

4185. Then you think that if the wages were raised at Derby and Congleton by the influx of weavers into Coventry, which was understood to be your view of the operation of this change, it would be beneficial to the trade, and that wages would not fall at Coventry by the influx of the weavers?—I did not intend to express an opinion of there being an influx of weavers.

4186. If wages were equalized, those wages could not be maintained if the supply of labour was greater than the demand?—No.

4187. Would not this effect follow, that Derby and Congleton, having lost their weavers, would be obliged to come up to the standard of Coventry where the weavers had fled?—If they could not get more.

4188. Then it would equalize the wages?—Yes.

4189. You have said that you proposed, when this list of prices came into operation in Coventry in 1831, that there should be a local committee, to meet any emergency of the trade, such as yours, seeing there was a diminished demand; do you think that such a plan as is now alluded to might involve in it that local committee?—I am of opinion local boards might be very advantageous to trade, but they should not have the direction of wages.

4190. Would you call it having the direction of wages, what was merely making binding the prices of those manufacturers working up the greatest quantity of goods?—It would be controlling them.

4191. It would not direct them?—No; the Act would direct them; it would compel a continuance of that which otherwise might not continue.

4192. Suppose there was a local committee, to meet any change of circumstances that might imperatively demand a change of the minimum?—Then, judging from my own experience, I should say it would not meet the difficulty, nor provide a cure, because it has not in times past.

4193. Do you not think it would be an advantage, supposing the manufacturers making three-fourths of the goods made in Coventry were to agree to give a certain rate of wages; would it not be advantageous that wages should be kept up at that rate, rather than the other fourth should take advantage of distressed times, and get work done at lower wages?—No, it would not be an advantage.

4194. You think it would be an advantage for one-fourth of the manufacturers to have it in their power to fall the wages, and lower the condition of the weaver?—They could only have the power if there was a deficiency in the demand.

4195. The question supposes that the manufacturers can sell their goods at the wages paid?—We do not know what the manufacturer can do.

4196. Supposing three-fourths of the manufacturers were to agree to a list of prices, from which list they could get a profit upon their goods, do you not think it an advantage to keep up that list of prices rather than allow a small proportion of them to bring down the prices?—No, I think it should be left perfectly free.

4197. Do you think it would be advantageous to any trade to allow a small minority to govern the majority, when the result would be to lower the condition and comforts of the working people?—I believe that the minority cannot be said to govern; circumstances govern.

4198. If three-fourths of the manufacturers, who make three-fourths of the goods, say, We can afford to give such and such wages, and get a fair profit upon the goods, surely the manufacturers would be acting in support of their

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own interests by keeping up the wages at that rate; and you are of opinion that the other one-fourth getting their work done at a less rate than that would be advantageous to the trade and the weavers?—I think it advantageous to the trade that the thing should be left perfectly free.

4199. That is your opinion, upon general principles?—Yes.

4200. You distinctly express your opinion that it is an advantage to the trade that one-fourth of the number shall have the power to keep down the wages of labour, and that contrary to the opinion of three-fourths of the body?—If the want of demand gives them the power.

4201. According to your own principles of free trade, would not those higher-paying masters reduce the rate the moment they found a necessity to do so?—It might be expected; but they have not always done so.

4202. Do you think that those higher-paying masters employ their weavers with as much confidence, when they feel the perpetual tendency, of necessity, of his position pressing a reduction of wages, and so interfering with the rate at which they can sell their goods?—Perhaps not.

4203. Then if the higher-paying master was secure in the wages he was paying, he would employ the weaver with greater confidence?—So far as that goes.

4204. Would not that be an advantage to the weavers generally?—Sometimes it would, but not always; the contrary, sometimes.

4205. State the circumstances under which the employment of weavers with greater confidence would not be a benefit?—If the manufacturer felt satisfied in the brisk time of the year he could get all the goods made that were wanting, he would not anticipate the demand, nor employ men at all at other times.

4206. The list of prices is a voluntary fixed rate?—It would be a disadvantage to the weaver: when the manufacturer felt assured, when he wanted goods, he could get as many as he wanted, he would not anticipate the demand; and the weaver would be out of employ a considerable part of the year.

4207. Why?—For want of demand.

4208. If a lessened supply took place, would not there be a better demand for the article?—No; there would be a greater scarcity, but not a greater demand. I conceive the greater cheapness of goods increases the demand.

4209. Does not scarceness always cause a rise in the price of commodities?—Yes.

4210. Would not a rise in the price create afterwards a greater demand?—No, not a greater absolute demand, but diminish it.

4211. Would it create a greater demand?—No, but diminish it.

4212. On what principle do you carry on your trade; do you reduce the quantity of goods, and employ fewer weavers, when you can get better prices?—I endeavour to do the most I can with a profitable trade.

4213. When the prices rise, and you get better markets, and the weavers better wages, you increase your quantity?—Yes, I should.

4214. Does that afford additional employment?—Yes.

4215. That additional employment is an advantage to the weaver?—At the moment.

4216. Do you not find, when weavers' wages are reduced, that they generally work a greater number of hours?—Yes, I think they do.

4217. Has not that a tendency to produce a larger quantity of goods, and through that, a glut in the market?—Yes.

4218. Do you think it an advantage that the market should be glutted with goods?—No; I think there should be less made.

4219. Would you not consider that the establishment of a list of prices, which should prevent an advantage being taken in distressed times, to employ weavers at a lower rate of wages, would have a tendency to keep the market from being overglutted?—I have before explained, if the weaver was not allowed to take out work at reduced wages, he would find other means of doing it, by purchasing the material himself.

4220. You have stated that the employment of the weavers at reduced wages has a tendency to compel them to work a greater number of hours; do you not think that their producing a larger quantity of goods, by which the manufacturers are producing more goods than they can dispose of, is a disadvantage to the manufacturer himself?—Yes, so far as that goes.

4221. You express that, then, as your opinion, that it is not advantageous to the manufacturers to employ weavers at reduced wages in distressed times?—

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A fall is undoubtedly a disadvantage to the manufacturer, because it reduces the value of his stock.

4222. Does it increase the demand for goods?—There is a larger consumption when goods are cheap than when they are dear.

4223. Do the public buy a larger quantity because you can get 36 yards wove for 2 *d.* or 3 *d.* a piece less?—With regard to the temptation to the public I cannot speak; but the cheapness of ribbons I say increases the demand.

4224. To the weaver employed in the machine loom would it not make a material difference if you were to reduce the wages 2 *d.* a piece; so great a difference as in the one case to place him in a state of comfort, and in the other in a state of misery and want?—Yes, it would make a great difference to him.

4225. A piece consists of 36 yards?—Yes.

4226. What benefit would the public derive from so reducing his wages; could the calculation be made in a retail shop?—I think the calculation would be made in a retail shop; although not in a particular case, it would upon the average; it would bring particular articles below a certain point, so as to enable the shopkeeper to make a difference.

4227. Do you think that a retail haberdasher could make a calculation of the reduction of 2 *d.* in 36 yards, so as to induce the public to increase the consumption of the article?—Yes, he would make a difference in some articles, but not in others; so that the public would have an advantage.

4228. You have stated to the Committee that trade should be carried on on general principles; do you carry on your business on general principles or on practical principles?—On practicable ones, certainly.

4229. Are those at variance with general principles?—I cannot say; I do not recollect any variation; there may have been.

4230. In any general principle you would lay down, would it not be one consideration with you that the weaver who made those goods should be able to live well by his earnings?—That would be a consideration.

4231. If he could not do so, it would be a departure from the general principle you lay down?—No; my general principle is to give him a good living if I can; and my not being able to do so is no departure from the principle.

4232. Your general principle does not imply that the labourer should live by his labour?—I have no such general principle as that.

4233. Define your principle?—To employ labour upon the same principle as I would purchase goods.

4234. Whatever the consequence of its adoption might be to the thousands of weavers employed?—I believe I should best promote their interests by acting upon that principle.

4235. Explain to the Committee how you would best promote their interests?—I believe that any interference with the freedom of trade is injurious to the parties themselves; and by maintaining the freedom of trade I best promote their interests.

4236. Does the silk you work up in Coventry pay a very heavy duty?—Most of it very little indeed.

4237. You have a protection against foreign importations of silk goods?—Yes, we have.

4238. Do you think that the removal of that protection would place the weavers of Coventry in a better situation than they now are, or the manufacturers there?—It would, provided other measures were also dispensed, removing burthens that now fall upon them.

4239. What other measures?—All restrictions upon trade; the corn laws and various other things: but so long as those laws exist, I think they are entitled to a protection equivalent to it.

4240. Then your general principle you have to depart from in Coventry, in the protection you receive from the importation of foreign silks?—Yes.

4241. Then you must take the state of the Coventry manufacturers and the Coventry weavers as it now is, and state to the Committee whether it would not be better that the weavers' wages should be raised, in order that they might consume a greater quantity of the things that you produce, instead of having that consumption in foreign manufactures?—I do not believe that raising their wages would have such a result.

4242. Why not?—Because it would send the demand to other countries, which would supply the article upon better terms.

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4243. If the wages of the weaver were raised, and the wages of other labourers also, would not there be a greater consumption at home?—If they actually got more wages they would have more to spend; but those who purchase the articles they produce would purchase less of them, and the one would be equivalent to the other.

4244. Who would purchase less?—The consumers, because the incomes of people are fixed.

4245. Then the weavers with increased wages would consume less than they now do?—I admitted, if they got more wages, they would have more to expend; but other persons would have less to expend.

4246. What other persons do you allude to?—Consumers generally.

4247. Do you know that the number of consumers are far greater than the number of producers at Coventry?—Certainly.

4248. Are not the consumers to pay such a price to the weavers at Coventry as that those engaged in that production can live?—Not unless they want them.

4249. You cannot expect they would purchase them unless they wanted them; but do you know any that do not want those things?—There are many that do not want them, doubtless.

4250. Do you not, when you commence the make of them, anticipate that they will be wanted?—Yes.

4251. Then why do you anticipate that, except from the ability of those who want them to pay for them and consume them?—It is from that.

4252. You have stated that the wages in Coventry have declined since 1819?—Yes.

4253. Have you given in a list of prices to the Committee paid in 1819, and the prices paid now?—No, I have not.

4254. Have you got any such list of prices?—Yes, I have; here is a list of prices paid in 1819.

[*The Witness delivered in the following Paper:*]

Coventry, August 17, 1819.

AT a numerous Meeting of RIBBON MANUFACTURERS, held at the Castle Inn, for the purpose of regulating the Prices of making Ribbons, *C. Adams*, esq., in the chair:—

Resolved, That the Resolutions passed by the majority of this meeting shall be binding upon the whole.

That this meeting rely upon the co-operation of the manufacturers of this city and neighbourhood, now absent; and that the Weavers' Committee be requested to solicit their signatures, and report thereon.

That the following gentlemen be appointed to receive the Report of the Weavers' Committee:—

Mr. C. Adams, Mr. Cope, Mr. Merry, Mr. Roughton, Mr. Thomas Harris, Mr. Lilly, Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Reynolds, and Mr. Griffin.

That the annexed List of Prices for making Ribbons be adopted; the payment to commence the first day of September next.

That these Resolutions, with a copy of the List, be published once in each of the Coventry papers.

That the names of the persons who agree to these Resolutions, and those that dissent from them, be also published; and that each person who signs be requested to subscribe 3 *s.* to defray the expense.

That the thanks of this meeting be given to the chairman.

LIST of PRICES, to commence September 1st, 1819.

Engine Loom.

d.		*s.*	*d.*
½	Chinas, per gross -	2	6
1	— - - -	3	6
2	— - - -	5	–
4	— - - -	6	–
6	— - - -	8	6
8	— - - -	11	–
2	Mode - - -	4	6
4	— - - -	5	6
6	— - - -	8	–
8	— - - -	10	–
1	Sarsenets - -	4	–
2	— - - -	5	–
4	— - - -	6	–
6	— - - -	9	–
8	— - - -	11	–
10	— - - -	14	–
12	— - - -	16	–

d.		*s.*	*d.*
2	Indias - -	4	6
4	— - -	5	6
6	— - -	8	–
8	— - -	10	–
10	— - -	12	–
12	— - -	14	–
	Satins, per gross, shot hard or soft:		
1	— - - -	7	–
2	— - - -	8	–
4	— - - -	10	–
6	— - - -	12	–
8	— - - -	14	–
1	Satin Figures -	8	–
2	— - -	10	–
4	— - -	12	–
6	— - -	14	–
8	— - -	16	–

d.		*s.*	*d.*
8	Sarsenet Leys -	16	–
12	— - -	20	–
1	China Loves -	3	6
2	— - -	4	6
4	— - -	5	6
6	— - -	6	6
8	— - -	7	6
10	— - -	9	–
12	— - -	11	–
	Galloons:		
Black or magpie	-	3	–
White or coloured	-	3	6
4	Doubles - -	5	–
6	— - -	7	–
8	— - -	9	–
	Coloured ditto, 1 *s.* per gross extra.		

Single-hand Loom.

d.		*s.*
8	Satin shot hard or soft	16
10	—	18
12	—	20
14	—	22
16	—	25
18	—	28
20	—	31
	Orris Satins, or footed, same price.	
8	Satin Figures	21
12	—	24
14	—	27
16	—	30
18	—	34
20	—	38
24	—	46

Satin Figures if made with tyres, 2*s.* advance on each breadth.

Sarsenet Leys same as Satin Figures.

d.		*s.*
8	Oriental, with Satin Stripes	21
12	—	24
12	Damask Figures	32
16	—	40
8	Venetian Leys	23
12	—	26
16	—	30

Drawing in edges up to four dents, 1 *s.* per piece extra; if more than four dents, to be paid for accordingly.

d.		*s.*
6	Brocades	30
8	—	34
	Padusoys or Ducapes according to quality.	
12	Sarsenets plain	18
14	—	21
16	—	24
18	—	27
20	—	30
24	—	36

Plaids 1 *s.* per gross extra for every additional shuttle.

Purl and footed Sarsenets, 1 *s.* per gross extra.

4255. Was that the list for 1819?—Yes.

4256. Have you a list for the subsequent years?—I did not select these, not expecting to be asked for lists; but I have brought them with me in case reference should be made to the subject. I will put in those I have got.

4257. What is the date of your latest list?—The date of the latest I have brought is 1829, and that is only a partial list; it is only a list of certain articles.

[*The Witness delivered in the following List for* 1829.]

RIBBON TRADE.

List of Prices of Single-hand Work, agreed to by the Manufacturers of *Nuneaton* and *Coventry*, to commence October 1, 1829.

Eight-Leish Satins:

d.		*s.*
12	per Gross	16
16	—	20
20	—	24
24	—	28
30	—	36
40	—	42

If made rich, to be paid for extra.

Satin Loves and Five-Leish Satins, 2*s.* per Gross less than Eight-Leish Satins.

Orientals:

d.		*s.*
16	per Gross	22
20	—	26
24	—	30
30	—	38
40	—	44

If made rich, to be paid for extra.

Orientals, with Grograms, Leys and Brocades, to be paid for extra according to trouble.

Lutestrings:

d.		*s.*
20	per Gross	22
24	—	26
30	—	32
40	—	38

If made rich, to be paid for extra.

Brocade Lutestrings, Grogram Lutestrings and Figured Lutestrings, to be paid for extra according to trouble.

Satin Gauzes:

d.		*s.*
16	per Gross	24
20	—	28
24	—	34
30	—	42

If made rich, to be paid for extra.

Gauze Leys, 2*s.* per Gross extra.

Tyre-figured Gauze, 4*s.* per Gross extra.

Clipt-figured and Brocade Gauze, according to trouble.

Pads.

d.		*s.*
12	per Gross	20
14	—	25
16	—	30

If made rich, to be paid for extra.

Brocade Pads and Figured Pads, to be paid for according to trouble.

Damask Figures, Clipt Satin on Ground, to be paid for extra according to trouble.

All widths above 16 *d.*, One Shilling per Gross Shading.

I have a list for the single-hand articles for 1831, but not engine-made goods.

4258. What proportion of persons are employed at the single-hand work compared with the engine work in Coventry?—I do not know exactly; anything I said would be a guess. I should think less than half the total quantity is made in single-hand looms.

4259. But chiefly made out of Coventry?—Yes; the single-hand loom weavers live principally out of Coventry.

4260. Employed by the manufacturers out of Coventry?—Yes; there are some manufacturers live at Nuneaton.

4261. Can you state the number employed upon any single article stated in this list?—No, I cannot; I have no means of giving such information.

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4262. Have you any leading article upon which a greater number of weavers are employed than any other in Coventry?—In Coventry there are most employed in sarsnets, I judge.

4263. Are they single-hand looms or engine-looms?—In the engine-loom; in the single-hand loom most are employed in gauzes.

4264. Does that come into this list?—I do not recollect; I think they are not in the old list; they are a new trade, since that period at least.

4265. The single-hand-loom weavers now are subjected to no list at all?—No, I believe not.

4266. They receive whatever their masters choose to give them?—Whatever they can agree for.

4267. The prices are understood when the work is given out?—Generally speaking the warehouse has a list which the hands understand; but sometimes they take out work without making any inquiry.

4268. Is there any article that you recollect that you can give the prices for now and the prices in 1819, on which a considerable number of hands are employed?—There being no settled list for single-hand work, I cannot tell what is paid.

4269. Can you tell what the single-hand-loom weaver got in 1819?—Yes; here is a list.

4270. What would he get a week?—It varies considerably, according to the work.

4271. The average?—Not more than 7 *s.* in 1819, taking the old and the young.

4272. What would he get in 1824?—I do not recollect the prices in that particular year.

4273. Do you recollect 1826?—No, I do not recollect any intermediate year.

4274. What can the same weaver get now that got 7 *s.* in 1819?—I do not think the weaver in many articles could get more than 5 *s.* a week now, but upon some articles much more.

4275. How much more upon other articles?—I do not know the prices actually paid at this moment. I cannot give anything like precise information.

4276. You have stated that apprentices are introduced into the trade of weaving, because weaving is better paid for than any other description of work?—Than most other trades I said, not any other trades.

4277. Then are the other branches of employment at Coventry in a state that they cannot get an average wage above 5 *s.* a week?—The apprentices are not introduced into that branch in which 5 *s.* a week is got, but into a branch in which as much as 10 *s.* to 30 *s.* or 40 *s.* can be got.

4278. Are there a great number of hands employed in Coventry that can earn 30 *s.* or 40 *s.* a week?—At this time all the looms are employed that are capable of making this sort of work, which is considerable.

4279. How many hands are employed in that sort of work?—I do not know the number of Jacquard looms, but many hundreds certainly.

4280. Are there several hundreds?—Yes; but generally speaking, when high wages are given, men do not work the full time.

4281. What do you call full time?—What is called full time in Coventry is, in summer, from six in the morning till eight at night, with two hours intermission for meals; and in the winter, the time is from eight till eight, with an intermission of an hour and a half.

4282. Do you think there are several thousand weavers employed at Coventry and the neighbourhood?—Yes.

4283. Out of that several thousands, are there 500 that can get the wages you have just now stated?—Yes, I believe there are quite as many.

4284. Are there as many as a thousand?—I do not know; I think that must be the limit.

4285. Then what is the average of the other weavers who are not employed in the Jacquard looms?—I should say that the average of the sarsnet weavers can get 15 *s.*, satin weavers 22 *s.* or 23 *s.*; that comprehends nearly everything.

4286. What are the classes of weavers that can only get 5 *s.*?—The single-hand weavers employed upon sarsnets and satins.

4287. Have you not just stated that the sarsnet and satin weavers get 15 *s.* to 20 *s.* a week?—That is in the engine loom.

4288. What are the number of weavers that only get 5 *s.* a week, out of the several thousands you have named?—There are very few in Coventry that get so

little as 5 *s.*; there are a great number in the country that only get 5 *s.*; there are many thousands.

4289. Can those who are now employed at 5 *s.* a week, by any possibility obtain employment at the higher wages you have stated?—Yes, decidedly; and that has been done to a considerable extent since the introduction of Jacquard looms. I am assured by a manufacturer of Coventry there are 500 Jacquard looms set up in the country; I doubt whether there are so many.

4290. Are they altering their looms?—No, putting up entirely new looms.

4291. The single-hand looms cannot be altered to make that kind of work?—No; but it is a question whether they could not be altered for broad silks for ladies' dresses.

4292. They have attempted broad silks, and failed?—I do not know that they have failed; some of the parties have discontinued it, but I think it likely to recommence.

4293. What is the reason that the Jacquard looms are not more extensively used?—Because the produce of them cannot be sold when brought into competition with foreign goods.

4294. But you have said that men employed in Jacquard looms get 40 *s.* a week?—Yes, they can get that when fully employed; but there is not regular employment for them.

4295. Can you account for the fact, that a great proportion of the weavers in Coventry and the neighbourhood are only earning from 5 *s.* to 15 *s.*, and that there are others who can but will not earn 40 *s.* a week, and why that number is not reduced?—Those who get the lesser wages have not learned the art of making that article upon which greater wages is got.

4296. Is it not easy to change their labour from one branch to another?—Some have said not; but it is found to be easy, and 500 have been set up.

4297. How long should they work in those Jacquard looms to obtain 30 *s.* or 40 *s.* a week?—I believe they have not been employed half their time.

4298. That reduces their wages to 16 *s.* or 20 *s.* the year round?—Yes, it does.

4299. Do the weavers prefer this limitation of the work and the wages being maintained, to having their wages reduced, and more work given to them?—Yes, they prefer a limitation of the quantity, and higher wages.

4300. The weavers then will be averse to the reduction of wages?—Yes, under all circumstances.

4301. You have stated that the manufacturers of Coventry have injured themselves by not reducing wages?—Yes, I do.

4302. How do you make it out that they have been so injured, otherwise than by the competition they have had against them at Derby and Congleton, and other places?—And in France; that has caused their trade to go to other places.

4303. What would be the effect if French silks were prohibited; would it not be beneficial to Coventry and the neighbourhood?—I think not; and my reason is this, that the trade did not prosper during the prohibition. I have seen specimens of ribbons made a long time ago, very superior in workmanship to what was made during the prohibition.

4304. Was not the trade of Coventry a vast deal better when the prohibitory laws were in force?—No; it is in evidence before the House of Commons it was occasionally very bad.

4305. Do you not think it would be an advantage if that work now done by the manufacturers of France were given to the manufacturers of Coventry?—Yes, it would; but the doubt would be whether we should have it. If there were a prohibition we should not have it.

4306. For what reason?—Because the French produce very beautiful patterns, and in every variety, and when the prohibition existed the English hardly ever produced new patterns; so much so, that at one time that kind of ribbon was nearly discontinued that is worn upon ladies' bonnets.

4307. Would you suppose there would be any difficulty in obtaining patterns from France; could you not employ a person at Paris to send you patterns of everything produced, at a small cost?—Yes.

4308. So that you would be in possession of them as soon as they came out?—Yes.

4309. Could not you imitate them?—Yes, but the manufacturers would not do it, unless they were compelled by a competition.

4310. Admitting you can imitate the French patterns, do you not think it

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would be an advantage to this country if those patterns were manufactured by the manufacturers at Coventry, rather than those at Lyons and St. Etienne?—If they could secure the same demand.

4311. Why should the demand fall off, if they were made precisely the same?—Without the incentive of French goods being brought in, he would not produce novelties, the production of which would be necesssry for the maintenance of the trade.

4312. If he could get possession of the novelties he could imitate them?—He would not do it; they would not feel themselves compelled to introduce novelties; they did not feel themselves compelled when the prohibition existed, and would not again.

4313. Are you aware that Mr. Cheaper stated to the Committee in 1832, that the manufacturers of Coventry were capable of producing every article fully equal to those produced in France, and had produced as good patterns; and that the same was stated by Mr. Brunskill?—I do not recollect the evidence of those gentlemen; but I am entirely of that opinion.

4314. Then surely, if the manufacturers of this country can produce goods equal in fashion and texture and beauty to those of France, it would be an advantage if they were made in this country instead of France?—Yes, if they were compelled to do so.

4315. You mean, for want of compulsion they will not do it?—Yes.

4316. Are there not fabrics in the cotton trade with which the foreigner does not come in competition with the home manufacturer, that are continually changing fashion?—I believe so, but I do not know.

4317. Is there not sufficient home competition to induce one manufacturer to start a new pattern?—It was proved that there was not, because during the competition the manufacturer scarcely ever introduced novelties.

4318. Was there during the war an opportunity for persons going over to France to obtain patterns?—No.

4319. Might it not be for the want of obtaining the patterns, rather than the prohibition?—Yes, but I conceive that they ought to contrive novelties themselves.

4320. Do we not find the manufacturers in the Manchester market constantly starting new patterns?—I have understood so.

4321. Is there any reason why the manufacturers at Coventry, if they could not start a new pattern themselves, should not get it from France, now there is a facility of passing to and fro'?—There would be no obstruction that I am acquainted with; but if prohibition were re-established, there would not be the same competition to compel them to do it.

4322. Why not?—We are supposing foreign goods are prohibited; the customers not having an opportunity of buying French goods, they would put up with what they could get.

4323. Are you aware that an immense number of the English population pass to and from France yearly?—Yes.

4324. Do you not know that they are in the habit of buying French things?—Yes.

4325. Could not they give patterns to manufacturers?—Yes, but there would not be the same inducement to obtain them as at present.

4326. Can you give any reason why the same stimulus should not exist in the breasts of the silk manufacturers as exists in the breasts of the cotton manufacturers?—No, I cannot.

4327. During the prohibition, or at the close of the war, was not the trade of Coventry a great deal better than it is now, generally speaking?—The total demand was considerably less than now.

4328. Were weavers and manufacturers better off at the close of the war than now?—No, I think not; though the profits were larger then.

4329. They were not better off in consequence of receiving higher profits?—The trade was less upon the whole. I think, on consideration, they were better off.

4330. And they have been worse off since there has been a greater demand for their goods?—Yes.

4331. How do you account for it?—Because the competition has gone on against each other to reduce the profits.

4332. The

4332. The skill for the invention of patterns is not equal at Coventry to what it is at Lyons?—Certainly not.

4333. Do the French manufacturers produce goods for sale, or first take orders before they commence manufacturing?—I am told it is both ways; but at this present moment they are taking orders.

4334. Has not it been their custom invariably, since the trade has been open, that they have brought over their patterns, sometimes designs on paper, and shown them to the buyers, and made to order?—Yes, it is the practice.

4335. Have they not generally done so in October and November, what are produced for the spring?—The time of taking the orders will vary; but that is their practice.

4336. Could not you get pattern-drawers from France to this country, in order to produce as good a style of pattern as is produced in France?—At a certain expense we could.

4337. You think that means may be adopted to put the manufacturers in Coventry in possession of as good designs as those of France, if proper encouragement was given?—Means could be adopted to obtain the same designs.

4338. If they were encouraged by sufficient protection?—Yes.

4339. Of course you infer, that under such circumstances there would be no less taste and style shown by the manufacturers of this country than is now produced by the French manufacturer?—I have said already that they could do it, and they would not.

4340. Why not?—They have not sufficient motives; their goods would be brought into competition with each others only.

4341. Would not the motive be greatly increased by getting patterns from France?—No, it would be in the circumstance of competition with each other; the manufacturer is now compelled to make the best style of patterns, otherwise the French would take off the demand, but if he omitted to bring out novelty, he would only have the persons at home against him.

4342. Would it not be as great at home as can exist now, when they are competing with each other and the manufacturers of France as well?—In practice it has been found not; before the Jacquard machinery was introduced into Coventry, 10 years elapsed at the time of the war.

4343. Are you aware that Mr. Brunskill and Mr. Cheaper expressed their opinions to this Committee in 1832, that the manufactories of this country were fully equal in the production of designs to those of France?—I am not aware that they expressed that opinion.

4344. Could you doubt?—They are most decidedly inferior to the French in the production of patterns, but I know of no natural incapacity on the part of Englishmen.

4345. Supposing they could get patterns from Lyons, and designs, and avail themselves of all the resources that may be offered to them?—I have said then it is in their power to do it, but they would not do it.

4346. Is not there great competition among the home manufacturers to produce a better fabric?—Yes, there is.

4347. For what purpose do they compete in that way?—For the purpose of increasing their sale.

4348. Would not they compete to produce an improved pattern with the same view?—They would compete, but not sufficiently to keep us up to the standard we are now at; that has been proved by the fact.

4349. Do you consider that proof, that, at least with the experience we have had before, we are able to make patterns equal to France?—No; and subsequently after the war ceased, there were very few made till a considerable time after.

4350. Do you think that now we have obtained the French patterns, we should be at all likely to go without them?—We should go back I think, but not to so bad a standard as before.

4351. You have stated there is an over-production of goods in Coventry, and that this has taken place notwithstanding there is an actual greater demand?—Yes.

4352. You have also stated that the reduction of wages has led to this over-production; do you still recommend a further reduction in wages, in order to remedy the complaint of the Coventry manufacturers and the Coventry weavers?—I said the reduction of wages was calculated to cause a greater production, but I do not ascribe

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ascribe all the over-production of Coventry to that cause; the over-production arises from our being undersold by the French.

4353. But you say you have actually a greater demand notwithstanding?—I say there is an actually greater demand for ribbons than there was formerly, but we cannot supply it because we are undersold.

4354. Then what becomes of the demand?—It goes to France.

4355. Then I am not to understand that there is a greater demand for the goods produced in Coventry?—Yes, there is a greater demand too, even in Coventry; but when I spoke of the demand, I spoke of the entire demand of those who wanted ribbons for consumption, but there are more ribbons sent out of Coventry than there was years ago.

4356. You have a greater demand then, and yet there is an over-production?—Yes.

4357. And you think that a remedy would be found by the reduction of the wages, which you have already adopted, and you have this over-production arising out of it?—Yes, I think the remedy would be in the reduction of wages in other articles.

4358. If you are undersold by the French now the duties exist, what would take place if the duties were repealed and trade free, as you would wish it to be?—Unless the labourers of this country increased their skill, and were released from certain burthens, they would be ruined.

4359. What burthens do you allude to?—There is a protection upon many articles.

4360. You would have that protection taken away?—Yes.

4361. That is upon general principles?—Yes.

4362. Upon practical principles you would not recommend it?—I should do nothing rashly.

4363. Do you think that the English weaver, with all the taxes he has to pay, could compete with the French weaver who has very small taxes to pay?—If there be free competition, I think ultimately he will beat him.

4364. In how many years?—I cannot say.

4365. What would take place in the mean time?—A great deal of distress.

4366. Do you think that the ultimate uncertain object you have in view is worth all the certain distress that would exist in the mean time?—Yes.

4367. You say that the English silk-weaver could not compete with the French weaver, in consequence of the increased taxes he has to pay?—Not on that single account; the corn law is one reason.

4368. You say we are undersold by the French, and subsequently you say you think we shall ultimately beat them in the production of goods?—Yes.

4369. State your reason why you think we shall ultimately beat them?—By the introduction of machinery into the silk trade.

4370. Do you not now employ all the most improved machines that have been introduced into France?—No.

4371. Then the French are now working superior machines to those of Coventry?—Yes, at this time.

4372. Machines have been introduced into Coventry?—Yes, but not used.

4373. What are they called?—The bar-loom with the Jacquard apparatus.

4374. Is there any difficulty in introducing it?—No, not beyond the expense.

4375. Do you understand the construction of it?—Yes.

4376. Why is it not introduced?—A new thing is difficult to work, and those machines are very expensive.

4377. Do you think there is a deficiency of capital or public spirit in Coventry to erect this machinery?—The person who first introduces a novelty generally loses by it; he is at greater expense and difficulty, but when he has perfected his plans, others can imitate them.

4378. Do you not think there would be a feeling to induce them, now that the French are underselling us, and they having the means in their power by the erection of certain machines, to introduce those looms in Coventry that would have the effect of cutting the French goods out of the market?—The advantage I expect that would enable the English ultimately to beat the French is not by those machines, but still superior ones, by the application of power to those machines: power is not applied to them at present.

4379. The discovery has not been made?—Yes, I have heard that there are some

some looms in the west of England worked upon that principle; I do not know the fact, but I am pretty certain it is true; it is water power.

4380. Have you any large capitalists in Coventry?—Yes, some.

4381. Not like the capitalists of Manchester?—No.

4382. You have only half a dozen at Coventry whom you can call capitalists?—We have several tolerably wealthy, but not like those of Manchester.

4383. Not such as would embark in an adventure of that description?—No.

4384. Have you not said that the French have better taste in the production of patterns?—Yes.

4385. Are they not in advance of us in the silk manufacture?—Yes, they are.

4386. Do you see any reason why they should stop as we are going on?—I do not think they will stop, but I think British ingenuity will overtake them.

4387. Then why does not British ingenuity and British capital, which is known to be superior to all the rest of the world, take advantage of the description of machinery existing in France, and not existing in this country, to introduce a better article?—I gave a reason just now, that the introduction of any new plan is calculated to produce loss to the persons introducing it.

4388. Are not new machines introduced every month at Manchester?—Yes, but on that subject they have a stronger feeling there.

4389. Do you think that the distance of 100 miles makes a great difference in feelings?—Yes, and there is an opposition to it at Coventry; there was a year or two ago a factory burnt down where machines were erected.

4390. Is not there opposition to machines at Manchester?—Not of late years.

4391. Do you think they are making a greater rate of profit at Manchester than at Coventry?—I know of no reason why there should be a difference.

4392. Is not the diminution of profits one of the reasons for the introduction of machinery?—So far as the inability to get profit by the old modes is a reason for trying new.

4393. Have you not stated that the rate of profit at Coventry is lower than it was?—Yes.

4394. Do you see any reason why the manufacturers in Coventry should not try new modes of getting profit when the old modes fail?—I do not say they get no profit; it is diminished.

4395. You have stated your desire to see the corn laws abolished?—No; I stated that I thought, before English weavers were put in competition with foreigners, all the burthens that they were subjected to, that foreigners were not, should be removed.

4396. Do you wish that the protection should be taken away from the English corn-grower?—No, I think that would be unfair; it would leave the English corn-grower unprotected.

4397. Would you sweep all the restrictions away in one day?—No, I would not do any thing so rash.

4398. You say you are an advocate for free trade?—Yes; but I would do it gradually, and not do it at one step.

4399. Do you think that the English corn-grower could grow his corn, considering that he is higher taxed than foreign countries, without being put upon a fair footing with foreign countries?—I think no regulation can enable us to make foreigners pay our taxes.

4400. Do you consider that we are now in an artificial state?—Certainly.

4401. Do you think your principles are applicable to a natural or an artificial state?—I think they are applicable to the state of England; but I would not make the experiment rashly.

4402. Do you think we should ever have those principles, applicable to a natural state, applied to the state we are now in with regard to our trade?—Yes; we must pay our debt ourselves, and not make others pay it.

4403. Can we pay our debt out of nothing?—No, we must pay it out of our property.

4404. If the English corn land cannot produce corn at the rate that continental corn can be produced at, with the present taxes in England, the taxes would have to come out of nothing, because that corn land would produce nothing?—That does not apply to all corn land.

4405. Then your calculation goes to throw a certain portion of the corn land of this country out of cultivation?—Yes, that would be the effect.

4406. Supposing your general principles were to throw half the corn land out of

 cultivation,

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cultivation, would you wish that consequence to ensue from the application of your general principles?—I would be prepared to meet any consequence of that kind, because any greater value that it has now given to it than it would have under those circumstances can only be taken out of the pockets of the consumers of corn.

4407. Suppose the same rule was to be applied to all species of manufacture, and it should be found that manufacturers were not able to produce their goods, with the taxes they have to pay, upon an equal footing with foreigners, and supposing half of their trade were taken away by the trade of the corn-grower, should you wish that consequence to ensue from the application of the general principle?—The result of the application of my principle would be to make people produce what is valuable.

4408. Suppose the result of the application of the principle was to disable the home manufacturer, in consequence of the taxes he has to pay, from producing upon equal terms with the foreigner, and that it should have the effect of taking away his trade instead of increasing it, should you abide by that consequence?—Yes, but I would make the alterations gradually.

4409. Would the ultimate result to this country be in any way different, from the process being gradual, if the result was to take away the trade of the manufacturer and the trade of the corn-grower?—I believe the operation of it would be to displace labour, and not destroy employment altogether; they would find other modes of working more advantageous.

4410. Supposing the result was to confine our manufacturing industry to one or two branches of trade, instead of a great number, as it now is, do you think there is not capital and machinery in this country to overstock the world with the article produced by any one branch of trade?—I do not think it would be confined to one or two branches.

4411. That is a matter of opinion as to the result of the application of your general principles?—Yes.

4412. You are of opinion that the manufacturers and corn-growers would then do equally well as they do now?—I think the agriculturists would do equally well; but certain land would lose its value in part, or in some cases, all.

4413. Would not that deteriorate the value of those that remained in cultivation?—Yes, I think it would.

4414. More labourers would come into the labour market, or have to be supported upon the poor's-rate, and it would make farmers compete with farmers?—Yes.

4415. And that would deteriorate the value of those remaining in cultivation?—Yes.

4416. Have you not a certain market now at home?—There is a circumstance that would increase the value of other corn lands, and that would be the diminution of the quantity produced at home: if there was a diminished quantity produced in the country, the value of that which was produced would be increased.

4417. Would that be the case if an equal quantity came from abroad?—That which came from abroad would come loaded with expense.

4418. But still at the continental price?—Yes; and any price we get beyond that is taken out of the pockets of other classes.

4419. If the corn-growers are paying something out of their pockets in consequence of the protections afforded to other trades, it is a fair give and take?—No, not a fair one.

4420. Are you prepared to exchange the certain market you have at home for the uncertain market you will have abroad, after the application of your general principles?—Yes, it would be advantageous to run that risk.

4421. Is it in consequence of there being so low a rate of profit that you think the existence of that low rate of profit is worth the risk?—The low rate of profit is in a great measure owing to the operation of the corn laws.

4422. Would not the effect of taking off the corn laws be to lower the price of corn?—On the average of a series of years, I should say yes.

4423. Should you say your trade was better off when corn was high?—It was better off formerly.

4424. At the close of the war, when wheat was very nearly three times what it is now, was it better off?—Yes.

4425. Then it is not the high price of corn that necessarily militates against your interest as a manufacturer?—No, I am thinking of the whole of society.

4426. Were not the weavers better off during the war than now?—No.

4427. Have you not stated there was less complaint and less discontent?—No.

4428. You say they got 7 *s.* a week then?—Yes, but there was a great deal of want of employment.

4429. If the weavers of Coventry and the neighbourhood have stated they were much better off during the war than now, you do not believe that their statement is true?—No, I should not believe it. I think the Committee will have the means of satisfying itself upon that point by a reference to the evidence given by the weavers in former years.

4430. If a weaver has stated to this Committee that he was better off during the war, when paying 5 *s.* a stone for his flour, than now, when he is paying 1 *s.* 6 *d.* a stone for his flour, you would think he was making an incorrect statement?—If he represented that case as the case of all, he was mistaken; it might be so in his own case.

4431. You think the weavers are more content with their situation now than 20 years ago?—I think they are as contented with their situation as they were 16 or 17 years ago.

4432. Notwithstanding anything they may say to the contrary?—Yes, and the proof of that will be found in the evidence they have given before Committees in former years.

4433. That cannot possibly refer to the evidence they have given before the Committee in 1835?—I think it would go to establish the fact that they were discontented in former periods.

4434. Are you aware that Mr. Goode and Mr. Poole expressed an opinion quite at variance with that, before the Committee of this House in this year?—No, I am not aware of their evidence.

4435. Would you think the opinion expressed by those two individuals a correct one, and that they had the means of knowing the relative condition of the weavers at one period and another?—They would be able to say what their own situation was, and they have considerable means of knowing the general situation of the weavers.

4436. Have you seen Mr. Fielden's proposed Bill, and the evidence he gave last Session?—I have.

4437. If that Act was passed, do you think it would be easily evaded?—Very easily.

4438. Will you state how?—I have stated that the weaver, when not able to get work, would purchase the material and make goods, and sell them himself, and consequently would not get the rate of wages.

4439. Has that taken place already?—Yes, to a very considerable extent.

4440. So as to enter so much into competition with the goods of manufacturers as to lower their prices, and disable the manufacturers from giving the prices they were giving before?—So as to take away their trade to a considerable extent.

4441. Can you state as a fact that manufacturers have given up trade, or have given less wages, in consequence of the labourer working up silk as his own?—I do not state that precisely; the effect of the trade being carried on by the weavers themselves of course diminishes the trade of the manufacturers; but that it has ever driven them out of the trade altogether, I have not said.

4442. Have you ever known it to proceed to such an extent as to induce the manufacturers to give a lower rate of wages in consequence?—Yes, I think it has; and it disabling the manufacturers to get a proper price, has created a wish to offer a lower rate; but I have before said, the manufacturers are not disposed generally to make the reductions necessary.

4443. This is the result that you draw from general principles, and not from what you have known in your own experience?—I cannot say that it has had that operation upon any particular manufacturer's mind, that he has paid lower wages; but I state the fact, that they have made these goods, and undersell the manufacturers.

4444. This is the theoretical result you come to?—I am stating the fact, that a vast quantity of goods have been made by the weavers, and that those goods have been sold lower than the manufacturers can afford them; but I cannot state the effect upon the minds of the manufacturers.

4445. Nor can you state that it has had any injurious effect upon the condition of the weavers up to this time?—Inasmuch as I cannot trace the cause of the reductions in the wages distinctly, I cannot say that that result has been produced in consequence.

4446. Is there any other reason you would assign for the evasion of the Act?—Yes;

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Yes; another reason is, the introduction of apprentices. If manufacturers are compelled to pay a certain rate of wages, and can produce goods lower by the introduction of apprentices, they will do so.

4447. What is there in this plan which militates against the introduction of apprentices?—Some get their work made lower than other manufacturers by the introduction of apprentices, and they stop the trade of others willing to pay the lists.

4448. There is nothing in the plan proposed by Mr. Fielden to hinder any manufacturer employing apprentices?—No; but the result is to force wages down.

4449. Apprentices only form a very limited portion of the weavers?—No; bu they would form a much larger one if the system continued. A manufacturer told me his half-pay apprentices had been getting 19*s.* or 20*s.* a week at the time the regular weavers could get no employment at all.

4450. Then the wages of the apprentices are not lowered?—They are getting 16*s.*, 19*s.* or 20*s.* a week.

4451. That is, half of 40*s.*?—Yes; I have stated them as high as 40*s.*

4452. The law does not acknowledge half-apprentices; it is an illegal binding?—I am not aware of that at all; it is an unpopular arrangement, but not at all illegal. The arrangement is, instead of the master providing food and lodging for the apprentice, he provides it himself, or his parents, and he stipulates to receive half the price that the master pays at the warehouse.

4453. You have stated that one means by which the Act would be evaded would be by the weaver, when he cannot obtain work, purchasing the materials and weaving for himself?—Yes.

4454. Then those weavers become manufacturers at that time?—Yes.

4455. Is he not one of those manufacturers who leads in the reduction of wages, and consequently brings down others after him?—He does not pay wages to others; he manufactures in his own family.

4456. He obtains wages in that way in his own hovel?—Yes.

4457. He becomes a manufacturer by purchasing the materials?—Yes.

4458. After he has become a manufacturer, is he not one of those who leads in the reduction of wages, if he sells his web at a lower price than the other manufacturers?—Yes, he does.

4459. Do you not think that the weaver, if this protection was given, would be anxious to obtain the best wages he could?—Certainly.

4460. Would he not prefer weaving a less quantity of work, even if he purchased the article himself, rather than reduce the wages of himself and others in the same trade?—No, he would consider it his advantage to employ the whole of his time.

4461. If he got less wages by employing himself the whole of the time than part of the time?—Unless he made an arrangement with those similarly situated, he could not keep up his wages.

4462. He would come under the Act?—No, he is not a person paying wages.

4463. Has he not an interest in maintaining the wages?—Yes.

4464. And knowing the others could not reduce below the price he could obtain, would he not prefer weaving such a quantity at the old wages as he could dispose of as would give him the same sum?—Yes, he would prefer it; but he could not effect it, unless he first came into an arrangement with others similarly circumstanced.

4465. Why not? you say one of the causes of reduction is over-production; do you know that the weavers agree with you in that?—No, I do not.

4466. Are you aware that the weavers have stated over and over again that they would prefer having the work limited and the wages maintained, to the wages being reduced and more work given out?—I have stated that in other places.

4467. Do you think they would act upon that principle?—I do.

4468. Would not the weaver who employed apprentices also have an advantage in upholding wages?—Yes.

4469. Would he not prefer limiting the quantity of work for his apprentices to weave and maintaining the wages, to compelling them to produce more work and obtain only the same sum?—Yes, but he could not calculate upon any compact being kept of that kind.

4470. This is the act of the manufacturer who has the apprentices?—Yes; he would wish that state of things, but could not accomplish it.

4471. Why

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4471. Why not?—He would not have any assurance that though he limited the quantity of work for his apprentices, others would do the same.

4472. But he would know that no manufacturer producing goods could pay less than the minimum price?—Yes.

4473. Would he commit a suicidal act upon himself by attempting to defeat that object?—He would promote his own private individual benefit at the expense of the public good.

4474. Would it be his own private advantage to work for less than the minimum?—It would be to his advantage that his apprentices should employ all their time.

4475. Though he produces a greater quantity of goods, if he did not obtain a greater sum for them?—He would not know the exact operation of the measure when he commenced it, and it would be very clear to him, as far as the appearance went, it would be a benefit to him; he would not trouble himself with ultimate consequences.

4476. Then you think the men who purchase materials and work them up are so ignorant of the operation of wages upon their comforts, that they would take the course you have supposed?—It would induce them to break into it, because they have no confidence in others.

4477. But has not that confidence been broken in upon, because one manufacturer leads in the reduction of wages, and no manufacturer believes he is safe?—No, I do not think it has arisen from that circumstance.

4478. You say one cause of the evasion will be the introduction of apprentices, and that they are receiving 19*s.* and 20*s.* a week?—Yes.

4479. You have before stated that the weavers put their own children to work at weaving generally?—Yes.

4480. Are not their own children their apprentices?—Sometimes their own children, and at other times they take the children of other trades.

4481. But generally speaking, their own children must be taken as apprentices?—Yes, almost always.

4482. If they were receiving any additional advantage, would the weavers themselves object to that?—No.

4483. Would the power given for settling disputes by arbitration in Mr. Fielden's proposed Bill be sufficient?—I have not seen that point; I recollect the old plan.

4484. The plan proposed is, in case of any dispute as to the work, in quantity or quality, that the question should be referred to two masters and two weavers, and if they disagreed they should appoint a referee; do you think that would be sufficient?—I think the plan in France much better; that plan of arbitration was acted upon before, but failed. Perhaps the proposed plan may be somewhat different: if the arbitrators did not agree, it was decided by the magistrate, and very few were decided by them.

4485. According to Mr. Fielden's plan, it is to be decided by some referee?—I think that would work very well; we want a better tribunal than we have to decide cases between masters and men; but I think the Conseil Prud'hommes much better.

4486. You have stated that your general principles do not comprehend the condition of the weavers?—I mean to say that my general principle is, that the individual employing the weaver cannot better his condition; but my general principles do comprehend the consideration of the situation of the weavers; I think freedom of trade is the best principle.

4487. Suppose in carrying into effect that principle of freedom of trade it should appear that the manufacturer cannot obtain a profit unless he worked his weaver or his man 15 hours instead of 12, would you think it would be a national advantage to carry on a free trade upon those principles?—I should say that the trade had better be relinquished altogether.

4488. Should you say, if it were impossible for the manufacturer to procure a profit,—when it was necessary for him, in order to procure that profit, to work his men more than 12 hours a day, that he had better relinquish the trade than pursue it to such an extent?—Yes.

4489. You would make 12 hours a day of labour a criterion of the advantage of any branch of trade?—I should not be disposed to promote any system that would extend the hours beyond that. I do not go to the extent of saying I would

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relinquish the trade if it went to 13 hours, but I think I should be disposed not to encourage it, because it would impair the physical powers of the men.

4490. Do you recollect when a list of prices was first introduced in Coventry?—There have been lists of prices beyond the memory of man.

4491. There was one established in 1816?—Yes.

4492. And various changes made in it up to 1831?—Yes.

4493. Were not you favourable to the list of prices in 1831?—Yes.

4494. And you did all you could to promote an adherence to it?—Yes; and for that purpose I proposed the plan of the permanent committee.

4495. What was the reason you altered your sentiments upon that subject?—Partly upon general principles, that all interference with the wages of labour was bad policy, and partly because there were such numerous modes of evading the list.

4496. They had attempted to break through the list about the latter end of 1833?—About the beginning of 1834, I should say.

4497. Was that feeling confined to yourself and one or two others, or was it the general feeling of the manufacturers, that it would be an advantage to depart from that list?—This was a proposed evasion of the list in one part only; it was not proposed at that time to break it down generally.

4498. Was the feeling general amongst the manufacturers that it was their interest to break down the list, or the opinion of one or two only?—It was not a general feeling.

4499. What do you suppose to be the general feeling of the manufacturers with regard to the maintenance of a list of prices?—I think their opinions are a good deal altered. I heard one gentleman, before I came away, express an opinion that any regulation that should prevent one or two setting examples of reduction would be proper; but not beyond that.

4500. Have you any reason to believe that it is the opinion of the manufacturers that it is desirable to do away with the list?—There is a great number unfavourable to the list now; at the first contest there were a great number of manufacturers that refused to have anything to do with the list.

4501. But a large majority determined to adhere to it?—No, I do not think a majority did.

4502. That list contained the names of the majority?—Yes, but those gentlemen refused to agree to any list; they utterly refused to have anything to do with it.

4503. What do you consider to be the opinion of the weavers upon the question?—They are almost universally in favour of a list.

4504. You stated that persons were apprenticed to the trade of weaving because the wages were better than those paid in other trades; what other trades are carried on in Coventry?—No other large manufacture but the watch trade.

4505. That is a very extensive trade?—Yes; the ribbon business has formerly taken off a number of hands from the watch trade, but the watch trade is now good.

4506. Are the weavers better paid, generally speaking, than the watchmakers?—I should say that the engine weavers are better paid than the watchmakers; but that is not the case with the single-hand weavers.

4507. The engine weavers is not a numerous class?—Yes, it is; but I think they have not such regular employment as in the watch trade.

4508. You stated in one case only about one-half of the wages were paid, and yet that the weavers would get 20*s.* a week; can you state the reason for that great difference?—I spoke of two cases.

4509. Is it owing to the adoption of a different system of manufacturing?—Yes. I will state to the Committee what the system is. In weaving there are two operations; there is the picking the warps, and there is the actual weaving: now the weaver leaves off the weaving in order to pick up his warps, as it is called; that is the usual system; but in this new system a person was constantly employed in picking the warps, for which purpose an inferior weaver would do, and another does the weaving, so that they work together; the person employed in picking up the warps received 12*s.* a week; they were more usually girls; there were then the apprentices working the looms, and they received a certain price according to the quantity they produced.

4510. Can you state any reason why that system is not adopted generally, as placing the weavers in so much better a condition?—There is one objection to it, that

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that the individual who practises it feels himself obliged to keep his hands going on all day.

4511. For how many hours a day?—I do not know that he was obliged to do it, but he did do it, and that would be an objection when work was not wanted; and another reason is, that it would require more active superintendence; another was, that had not the manufacturer his looms at home and under his eye, he could not have carried it into operation.

4512. Why cannot the workman work as well under his own roof?—There was a disadvantage in consequence of his working upon that plan; if it was attempted to be made general, it might cease to exist. I rather think he got the worst hands in the trade.

4513. But they got so much more than the best hands?—Yes. The hands do not like to encounter the odium of working contrary to the wishes of the general body.

4514. Do you not think that the body of weavers would like to get double the wages without more labour?—They do not like to encounter the odium.

4515. Would not every manufacturer adopt it, as matter of advantage to his own business?—On that account they would; but if it would make work too plentiful and overstock the market, it would be thought injurious.

4516. You have stated that one or two thousand weavers of Coventry may get 20*s.* a week?—Yes, they may if they choose; they can do it when they have full employment. The manufacturers, generally speaking, will not tie themselves down to give a man full employment.

4517. Have you ever known manufacturers to refuse getting a good profit when a price was offered to them to enable them to do so?—He prefers profit to none.

4518. Would not the weavers adopt the same principle, that would give them so great an advantage?—Not if they encountered other evils, such as the dislike and disapprobation of their fellow-workmen; and the thing went to such an extent that the body of weavers induced those men to leave their employment, and abandon this good work.

4519. Then the weavers generally would prefer, upon the present system, getting 10*s.* a week to 20*s.* a week upon this new system?—I said their general earnings were above 30*s.*, and by their half employment they probably get as much as those men at the year's end; but the weavers prefer working in their own houses; these men worked in a factory.

4520. Are there not a great number of weavers that receive only 5*s.* a week?—They are another class.

4521. They could as easily learn this trade as any other branch?—Yes; but it is very strange that at the time when some manufacturers, about a year and a half ago, made a proposition to the association and to the weavers at large to reduce the price of the Jacquard weaving of gauzes, and showed very good reason for the measure, and showed there would be an increased demand for their labour, they rejected it; and the single-hand weavers living in the country, who have such an obvious interest to get into the work, agreed to a list of prices, and this put a stop to putting single-hand weavers upon Jacquard looms.

4522. You have stated that you think the establishment of boards of trade would be advantageous to the trade of Coventry?—Yes, a local board would be advantageous, if it did not interfere with the wages.

4523. What functions should you give to that body?—The same as the Conseil des Prud'hommes in France; they should decide disputes between masters and men; they should give patents for inventions; they should get reports of the state of wages all over the kingdom, because I think that any regulations made should have a reference to that; they would be able to show the weavers when there was a necessity for a reduction; and I think they could bring into the country all the valuable improvements in machinery. I knew an instance the other day in which an opportunity of that kind was lost; two persons from Coventry went over to France, and they brought over an improved batton, and a collection was made from the trade to remunerate them for the experiment, and so far it was satisfactory to them. Those persons afterwards stated that there was also a very excellent winding-machine in operation in France. I mentioned the subject to the association, and proposed they should employ those persons to get this winding-machine. It happened that another proposition was acceded to, and that was to tell those persons to get it, and that they might calculate upon the remuneration afterwards; but the consequence was, they did not stir a step in it, and that machinery has never

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never been introduced. Now, had there existed a local board, I think it would have been their duty to bring over that and every other improved machine not used in England.

4524. Of whom would you have such a board composed?—The composition of it in France is very good: there are nine manufacturers and eight weavers upon that board, and they include the other trades that are practised in the town. I would propose that the board should be confined to the ribbon trade, and not interfere with other trades, though I have hardly a decided opinion upon the subject.

4525. In your opinion, in these lists of prices, have you discovered any difficulty in describing the various kinds of work, so that you may fix a price upon the labour in the trade generally?—The attempt to form a list at all is very fallacious; the difficulty I have seen is this, when you describe an article by a particular name, it does not describe the workman's earnings; a good deal depends upon the material; with a good material a man will get twice the wages he does by a bad material.

4526. There is no difficulty in making an allowance for the less or greater quantity put into the shoot?—I allude simply to the quality of the silk itself.

4527. That does not apply generally?—Yes, to all the silk trade.

4528. You have produced a list of prices here; do you find that inefficient to describe the article?—No, not to describe it, but inefficient to secure the rate of wages.

4529. You say the rate of wages was fixed upon and agreed to for two or three years?—Yes, so far as the description went; but it by no means secured the man the rate of wages, because if a manufacturer could not get a profit by employing good silk, he would accomplish it by employing bad silk, and by that means reduce the wages one-half.

4530. Did you find any misunderstanding arise from that?—There could be no misunderstanding, because it was understood that the manufacturer should have an opportunity of doing so.

4531. So that the masters and the weavers perfectly understood the wages to be paid?—Yes.

4532. Do you not suppose that if such a board of trade as you have described was established in Coventry, that that board could effectually establish, provided such a system was agreed upon, a list of prices for the various articles made in Coventry?—They could do what the association did in 1831, but they could not secure its real efficiency, on account of evasions.

4533. Suppose a law was made to inflict a penalty upon either master or weaver for deviating from the list that the board of trade would establish by the concurrence of the masters and weavers, then it could only be evaded in the same way that a man now violates the law by committing any unlawful act?—Yes, it could be evaded by the modes I have pointed out. It would not be directly disobeyed, but by working by apprentices, and by the weavers becoming manufacturers for themselves. I do not know whether that system of employing two hands upon a loom would be considered a direct breach of it.

4534. Such a board, the Committee understand, is to take in all the ramifications of the trade in every way; to meet every difficulty?—I would say that such a board could prevent all the evasions I am acquainted with: I would say that they ought to make a regulation that no weaver should be a manufacturer for himself. If they have the power to meet all difficulties, I should say that they could render it effectual.

4535. You have stated that there is a class of common weavers that might benefit themselves very much by adopting a particular system, but that rather than incur the odium attached to it, they would work at lower wages?—Yes.

4536. Do you not think if, at the request of the whole of the weavers, and a large portion of the manufacturers who employ them, with the sanction and authority of Parliament, such a regulation was established, that both the persons that have apprentices and those who work up goods in their own houses, would feel the same unwillingness to incur the odium of all those classes, by endeavouring to contravene such a regulation as that proposed in the Bill of Mr. Fielden?—In point of fact there has not been the same odium attached to it, and therefore they have practised it: why there is a difference, it is not for me to point out; but there is no odium attached to a man working up the silk himself.

4537. Do you not think that the probability is, that a person would feel an odium attached, if it was for his apparent benefit; for you have admitted it will be only an apparent and temporary benefit; under those circumstances, would he venture

to try to break down a measure which he had no doubt was intended for his good and all those engaged in trade?—I have no doubt that the weaver would prefer an immediate benefit to a contingent one.

4538. Why do they not enter into the employment of the Jacquard looms upon the principle mentioned?—There would be the odium of it.

4539. Would not the attempt to break down the plan proposed incur odium also?—I cannot say that; they have been in that situation, and the odium has not arisen; I should say not.

4540. Do you think that the local arrangements established at Coventry, without the means of being rendered effective at all, and not sanctioned by the Legislature at all, had or could have the same weight and authority as an Act framed after a long and tedious discussion in a Committee for nearly a Session and a half: would that have no influence upon the manufacturers and others engaged?—I think I have said the manufacturers are disposed already to keep up wages; they have lately gone from that point; but I think a more complete submission to the arrangement could be obtained with the aid of Parliament than without it.

4541. After knowing that the Legislature having taken means to get information from all parts of the empire?—All they would know would be that there was an Act.

4542. Do they not know that this Committee is sitting?—Yes; but I do not think the fact of the Committee or the House considering the question, would have much influence upon their minds.

4543. Would not the knowledge that the Committee had been sitting for two Sessions to obtain information, have some operation upon their minds?—I do not know that it would.

4544. You do not think that the Act would have any tendency to give it a sanction?—Yes, it would, because it would compel the parties to observe it; but I do not think that any feeling would arise that they were bound to respect the spirit of the Act, because a Committee of the House had sat to consider it.

4545. And that it was recommended by the great majority of the working classes in the kingdom?—It would not operate upon those who had any inclination to break through the rule.

4546. Though they would not be willing to incur the odium in one case, you think they would be indifferent about it if recommended by Parliament?—I judge from the experience of the past.

4547. Do you think that the manufacturers would resist the making an experiment that was demanded universally by the working classes?—I scarcely know what they would do now. A manufacturer, before I came away, expressed a strong objection to the proposed Bill.

I beg leave to add the following suggestions on the advantages to be derived from the establishment of local boards of trade in Coventry:—

It could decide differences between masters and workmen, and between masters and apprentices.

It might put into operation the livret system of France, which would enable workmen leaving their homes for want of employment to obtain it in places where they were unknown, and by which the losses of manufacturers by embezzlements would be diminished.

It could establish a school of art, the principal thing wanted to put the English ribbon manufacturer on a level with the French.

It would stimulate mechanical invention and skill, by distributing rewards and honours.

It could facilitate the introduction of the best machinery used in other places, and improved modes of manufacture.

It could collect statistical information, and prevent the continual necessity of Parliamentary inquiries.

It would be instrumental in introducing new branches of industry to take up the surplus labour of a place.

It would enable workmen to obtain the full market price for their labour, and, when the state of the demand justified it, would facilitate their obtaining advances in wages.

It could counteract the present practice of weavers bringing up their children to branches of trade already overstocked with workmen, and assist their introduction into other trades where labour was wanting.

[*The following Letters were delivered in, and read.*]

My Dear Sir, Byerley, near Bradford, Yorkshire, April 23, 1835.

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We are very greatly obliged by your kind attention to the worsted weaver whom we sent for examination, and also for the order for a summons which you have forwarded by him.

As, however, you state that a delay of three weeks in this interrupted Session would be occasioned by our pressing his examination, I dare not use the privilege you have offered, because it is not our wish to delay a measure of partial relief, even for three hours.

I have therefore to beg that you will allow me to resign the order for a summons, upon the *condition* that you will kindly engage to get our Petition inserted, together with a statement gathered from *the Report we printed*, respecting the condition and prospects of the Worsted Weavers.

Mr. Cayley informed me of the probability of your Petition being inserted in your Appendix, from which I infer, that you have the power to order such insertion, both for it and for any other document.

Mr. Fielden's plan is generally disapproved here; first, as being likely to increase power-looms; secondly, as putting too much power into the hands of large employers, in fixing the averages.

To John Maxwell, Esq. Your's truly,

G. S. Bull.

RESOLUTIONS adopted unanimously at a Meeting of Deputies from the Hand-loom Worsted Weavers of Bradford, Leeds and Halifax, and of several Townships in those Parishes and others adjoining, at Bradford, on Saturday, March 21, 1835.

The Report having been discussed and adopted, it was—

Resolved I. That it is desirable to form a *Central Committee* of five persons, to keep up communications between John Maxwell, Esq., M.P., the Chairman of the Hand-loom Weavers' Committee, and the Worsted Weavers, to furnish him with information, and to communicate with the weavers. (Five persons were accordingly appointed.) That in case any of the five shall be absent, a worsted weaver shall be called in to represent the absent party, or each of them, for the transaction of business.

Resolved II. That each township be requested to contribute to the expenses of obtaining and circulating information in the manner above proposed. That the sums thus raised shall be disbursed by the Central Committee, and accounted for to a Deputies' meeting, when the proceedings are closed.

Resolved III. That this meeting is actuated by no unkind feeling towards the employers in general, and that its proceedings and resolutions shall be made public, excepting as to the names of individuals who may not be willing to be known, for fear of losing their employment.

Resolved IV. That a public meeting is desirable to bring forward the subject of the unequal competition between steam-looms and hand-looms, and for devising and recommending some legislative and effective protection for the hand-loom weavers and their employers (who do not use steam-looms,) from the steam-looms and their proprietors, and that both parties, and especially the employers, be respectfully invited to attend, and that the arrangement of such a meeting be left to the Central Committee.

Resolved V. That this meeting attributes the depressed state of the working classes in general, and of the worsted and other hand-loom weavers in particular, to the following general causes among others:

1st. To home competition, and over-production beyond the profitable demands of the market.

2d. To a ruinous foreign trade.

3d. To the unrestricted use (or rather abuse) of improved and continually improving machinery, especially of steam or power-looms, as well as combing machines.

4th. To the *inequality* of taxation, which lies most unfairly upon the working classes.—To its unjust *amount*, inasmuch as the public creditor is receiving *more than his due*; and many unprofitable salaries, pensions and retiring salaries, ought to be abolished.

5th. The neglect of providing for the employment and maintenance of the Irish poor, who are compelled to crowd the English labour market for a piece of bread.

6th. The adaptation of machines, in every improvement, *to children, and youth, and women*, to the exclusion of those who ought to labour—the men.

Resolved VI. That to fill a country with inanimate and non-consuming machines, and to drive away the cultivators of the soil, and the consumers of produce, to foreign climes, when there are 17 millions of acres of uncultivated land in Great Britain and Ireland, for the most part capable of being made productive, is a species of combined political folly and cruelty; of folly which a worsted weaver ought to be ashamed, and of cruelty, which barbarians would not, and Christians ought not to practise.

Resolved

Resolved VII. That this meeting is convinced that no remission of taxes, no reduction of provisions, and no enlargement of political privileges, however desirable, will suffice to uphold the just interests of the labouring classes, in manufacturing parts especially, unless a due and wholesome legislative restraint be placed upon the time of working machinery, so as to prevent the ruinous glutting of home and foreign markets, and so as to keep the human machines in profitable employment. And also, that many of our masters require this protection as much as ourselves.

Sir, Paisley, 5th June 1835.

As Chairmen of the respective Committees of the shawl and silk gauze manufacturers of this place, we take the liberty of respectfully calling your attention to the following facts, deeply affecting the interests of the large and important body of the community, the hand-loom weavers, to the melioration of whose condition your exertions have been so long and usefully devoted.

You are probably aware that the establishment of a minimum scale of prices is the only mean which has hitherto been found in the least degree effectual towards arresting the growing decline in the respectability of this important and meritorious class of the community. About six years ago the shawl manufacturers of this place found that some such safeguard as this was essentially necessary towards saving their operatives from ruin and starvation; and as the plan of fixing a minimum scale of prices seemed to be the best adapted for securing the desired object, such a table was drawn up and agreed to by most of the manufacturers. These tables have been in operation among the shawl manufacturers for upwards of six years; and the silk gauze manufacturers, with the some laudable view of preserving their weavers from pauperism, have, for about two years and a half, been also generally regulating their rates of payment by a similar scale.

By means of extraordinary and incessant exertions on the part of the framers of these tables, they have been productive of very beneficial results, and have secured, in some measure, the object desired; but the whole of the manufacturers did not agree, or have conformed with very great reluctance, to the operation of these tables; and as the change of circumstance, from time to time, rendered it necessary to alter these tables, members of the body have as often stood out, declining to subscribe the amended tables, and employing weavers at rates below the generally established minimum; and a great deal of serious loss, trouble and painful collision has been the consequence of the falling off of any member of the body, even for a very limited time, from his co-operation with the trade at large, or of any new establishment rising up, and refusing to subscribe to the tables. This must necessarily continue to be the case so long as there exists no compulsitor upon the few to submit to the many; and the refusal of a single individual, mean enough to attempt to secure his own advantage at the sacrifice of the public welfare, will always so long continue to endanger the whole system of these tables, as, however willing to respect the interests of their workmen, it would be impossible for the general body of manufacturers to compete long with any one acting in disregard of these tables. Those who reprobate the idea of a compulsitor argue, that in such a case, the tradesmen have their remedy, in not working for the individual who shall deal thus with them; but there are times when the state of trade is such, that the alleged remedy cannot be resorted to; and at the best, that remedy consists in what is called a strike against the obnoxious house, the weavers combining not to take work from them, and supporting, from a fund raised for the purpose, the former weavers to that house, if they cannot obtain work elsewhere; a waste of money which can be ill afforded, and an incentive to that spirit of combination which ought not to have so justifiable a plea for its indulgence.

The position of the silk gauze manufacturers of the district at this moment offers a striking illustration of the insufficiency of the present system, as a mean of securing the interests of the operative, and of that class of the manufacturers who are desirous of maintaining the respectability and comfort of these operatives. The recent enforcement of the law for the equalization of weights and measures rendered it necessary to draw up a new table, equalizing the rates of payment for work to the new measures. This table differs in no respect whatever from the old, except that the new terms of measurement are substituted for the old, and the rates of prices calculated accordingly. But one of the parties by whom the former table had been subscribed and acted on withdrew, and refused either to subscribe the new table, or to join the other manufacturers in their rates of payment of weaving; and at this moment, and for some time past, this house, having secured weavers in a remote village (Dalry), has been manufacturing at a rate of remuneration to the weavers of from 10 to 15 per cent. below the table of minimum prices acted on by all the other houses in the trade. These other houses have remonstrated against this unfair encroachment, but as yet without effect; and the circumstance at this moment perils the whole system, which has now for two and a half years been found to work so advantageously for all.

The present position of this matter is one of vital importance, not to the trade alone, but to the whole district; even to the nation at large. It is the opinion of the more intelligent class of the operatives, that but for the effect of these tables, the price of labour would at this moment be 20 per cent. at least below what it now is; and if these tables of prices

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be once fairly broken through, as they necessarily must if one person continue to manufacture at a rate which all the rest of the trade must follow, then, from stage to stage, the spirit of competition must as necessarily grind down the weaver to the lowest point at which he can by possibility exist, and this without producing one whit of advantage in the long run to the manufacturer.

The necessity for legislative interference on the subject seems to us, from all our experience and observation, to be therefore undoubted; and we humbly think that a very simple remedy could be provided for the appalling evil. It is this, that the system of operation by means of minimum rates of payment should be recognised and protected by express statute; that tables of these rates should, from time to time, be prepared by that proportion of the trade which should be found to employ a majority, suppose two-thirds of the weavers in the particular branch of trade; that all the other manufacturers should be bound to the observance of tables to be thus prepared from time to time, and as often as should seem necessary to the committee of management of the respective trades; and that all attempts at infringement, direct or indirect, of these tables, by the employment of workmen in any part of Scotland below the prescribed minimum rates of wages, should subject the party to a penalty not exceeding 5 *l.*, perhaps, for the first offence, 10 *l.* for the second, 30 *l.* for the third, or otherwise, as might be considered expedient; to be pursued for by such office-bearer of the committee of manufacturers or other person as it might be thought fit to authorize.

Such are the views of the great majority of the manufacturers here; and if they are such as you think you could support in Parliament, we shall feel much gratified by your immediately directing the attention of the Legislature to the vast importance of the subject, and to the apparent practicability, by some such means as we have ventured to suggest, of remedying a state of matters which seems every day to threaten the ruin of a large, meritorious and important class of our operatives.

We should also be greatly obliged by your informing us, as soon as your convenience will admit, what steps, to be taken on our part, would be best calculated to attract the early attention of Parliament to the subject, and to aid you in any endeavours you may make to attain an object not less humane than essential towards the well-being of the country.

We have also addressed Mr. Fielden on this subject, and have requested him to lend you such assistance as may be in his power.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servants,

William Galloway,

John Maxwell, Esq., M.P. *James Whyte,* jun.

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A N A L Y S I S

OF THE

EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEES

ON

HAND-LOOM WEAVERS' PETITIONS;

(1834—1835.)

PREPARED FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THIS SESSION.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,*
10 *August* 1835.

Lunæ, 9° die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT a Select Committee be appointed to examine the Petitions presented to The House (during the last and present Sessions) from the Hand-loom Weavers, and to Report their Observations thereupon to The House.

And a Committee is appointed of,—

Mr. John Maxwell.
Mr. Brotherton.
Sir James Graham.
Mr. John Fielden.
Lord Ashley.
Mr. Bolling.
Lord Viscount Morpeth.
Mr. Fleetwood.
Mr. Richard Alexander Oswald.
Mr. Gillon.
Mr. O'Dwyer.
Sir Eardley Wilmot.
Mr. Thomas Attwood.
Mr. William Williams.
Mr. Wakley.
Mr. Plumptre.
Mr. Henry Stanley.
Mr. Hallyburton.
Mr. Emerson Tennent.
Mr. Mullins.
Mr. Henry Lytton Bulwer.
Lord Francis Egerton.
Mr. Graham Speirs.
Mr. Cayley.
Mr. Ainsworth.
Mr. Fizsimon.
Sir John Beckett.
Lord John Scott.
Mr. Harland.
Mr. Oliphant.
Mr. Hardy.
Captain Wemyss.
Mr. Aglionby.
Captain Gordon.
Sir Henry Parnell.
Mr. Robinson.
Lord Stanley.
Mr. George Frederick Young.
Mr. Blamire.
Mr. Baines.
Mr. Wallace.
Mr. Mark Philips.
Lord Dudley Stuart.
Mr. Turner.
Mr. Fox Maule.
Mr. Buckingham.
Mr. Fergus.
Mr. Forbes.
Mr. Matthias Attwood.
Lord James Stuart.
Mr. Brocklehurst.
Earl of Euston.
Mr. Bannerman.
Lord Viscount Stormont.
Mr. Edward Southwell Ruthven.
Mr. Walker.
Mr. Bootle Wilbraham.
General Palmer.
Mr. Poulett Thomson.
Mr. Baring.
Dr. Bowring.
Mr. O'Connell.
Mr. Thorneley.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers and Records.
Ordered, THAT Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Veneris, 13° die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT Sir Michael Shaw Stewart and Mr. Entwisle be added to the Committee.
Ordered, THAT Mr. Dugdale be added to the Committee.

Lunæ, 30° die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT Mr. Leader be added to the Committee.

Mercurii, 1° die Julii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to report the Minutes of the Evidence taken before them from time to time to The House.

Veneris, 7° die Augusti, 1835.

Ordered, THAT there be laid before The House an Analysis of the Evidence prepared for the Select Committee on Hand-loom Weavers.

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HAND-LOOM WEAVERS,

1834, 1835.

ANALYSIS of the EVIDENCE laid before The House of Commons during the Sessions of 1834 and 1835, relative to the INDUSTRIAL CONDITION of the HAND-LOOM WEAVERS of Cotton, Silk and Woollens, in reference to the *English* and *Irish* Evidence only.

IN conformity to the instructions received from *John Maxwell*, esq., M. P., Chairman of the Hand-loom Weavers' Committee, I have carefully analysed the whole of the Evidence submitted to the Committee during the sessions of 1834–35, and in order to elucidate so complex and voluminous a mass of testimony, it becomes necessary to divide the subject into three parts :

1st. The Evidence of Distress, and its Results;
2d. The Causes of that Distress;
3d. The Remedies suggested for its relief;

subdividing each of the foregoing parts and sections, according to the Evidence adduced.

I have, in every instance, allowed the witnesses to express their sentiments in the *vivâ voce* testimony given in to the Committee, and merely added copulative conjunctions, &c., to form consecutive sentences and paragraphs; the authority for each opinion being given in a foot note, together with the date of the evidence.

R. Montgomery Martin.

PART I.

DISTRESS, AND ITS RESULTS.

Section 1.—Evidence of Distress. | Section 2.—The Results of that Distress.

SECTION 1.—*Evidence of Distress.*

PART I. DISTRESS. Sect. 1. Evidence of Distress.

THE testimony of the deep distress and lamentable destitution pervading the hand-loom weavers in cotton, silk, linen and wool, is so general and so universally admitted, as scarcely to require analysing; a few instances may, however, be adduced from different districts to indicate its universality. And first, with reference to *Manchester*.

Mr. *John Ashworth*, a woollen manufacturer, able to speak to the condition of the hand-loom weavers at Manchester, and the surrounding district further north, Rossendale, Padiham and Burnley, says, I have been in the habit of visiting those places, and have had frequent communications with the weavers and others. I have visited Manchester most, lately; there I have been employed two-thirds of my time. At Padiham and Burnley I have been only once these 18 months, but Rossendale I visit once a month, and stop there a week at once. In the forest of Rossendale there are a great many hand-loom weavers employed principally in the woollen trade. The condition of the weavers engaged in hand-loom weaving I consider to be very bad; it does not appear to me that if a man with his wife, and, we will say, two children, regularly employed in full work, at the present general prices, could make anything like a decent living. As to furniture, it is exceedingly poor in general among the hand-loom weavers; there may be here and there an exception of a little furniture, but in general it is, in a manner, worth nothing: in many houses there is hardly a chair. Their clothing is equally as bad. I have seen some of their beds, and I have seen beds that have not had a blanket, and worse even than I can describe; in general they lie upon straw. This state of things I have witnessed amongst a great number of weavers resident in Manchester. I have seen this with my eyes. Those that are the most provident, and those who abstain the most from drinking, are generally the best off, better off than the others; there are families, however, that do not drink, as far as I know, and I have taken great pains to ascertain it, but still their furniture, clothing and bedding, is very little better than what I have already described, partly owing to sickness, or their larger number of small children. The earnings they receive when in full work,

are not near adequate to the supply of those wants that ought to be satisfied. I will give you a few instances: here is a housekeeper of the name of Jane Johnson, in Pump-street, four in the family; four, all dependant upon hand-loom weaving; the weekly rent 3 *s.* 8 *d.*; the looms employed are three; the earnings 15 *s.* for coarse sheeting. I understand this to be the journeyman's wages. I will suppose myself to be a journeyman; I go to weave coarse sheetings here, (there being three pair of looms employed, that would be 5 *s* per man per week); I should put 5 *s.* in my pocket for the week's work; it may be I am a married man, with a wife and one or two children, and though I go out to weave, I shall want a room for my wife and children and self to live in, and I do not think I can get a room for less than 1 *s.* a week; then we shall want a little fuel, I estimate that at 6 *d.*; I say nothing of the soap, or the breaking of a pot, but here is 1 *s.* 6 *d.* to take out of 5 *s.*, my week's wages; then I have 3 *s.* 6 *d.* left, on which I have to support myself and wife and one or two children, for a week. (*a.*)

James Brennan, of No. 15, Fawcett-street, Hancote-street, Manchester, 23 years a weaver of Marseilles toilet covers, states, that the rate of wages given in that branch is 10 *s.* a week, which they earn generally, with deductions of 2 *s.* 6 *d.* from it, leaving 7 *s.* 6 *d.* after the necessary deductions are made. Ours is the best paid branch of weaving in Manchester, owing to several inventions that have been usually put to it, such as the machine they call the Jacquard. When I commenced weaver I was but a boy then, but I could earn about 12 *s.* a week then, deducting 3 *s.* taken from it for expenses; but I could do as much more work now as I could do then when a boy. As to the effect of the fall in wages upon persons in my situation, it deprives me of all the comforts of life entirely; I can get nothing but the coarsest of food, and less in quantity than I used to do. I can let the Committee know how I expend my 7 *s.* 6 *d.* as nigh as possible: The Committee will recollect at this instant I employ myself. I have a wife and two children; I have a loom of my own; I have the whole 10 *s.* to myself in the family; there is nothing goes out, only my time when I am getting this work; there is something for sow and soft soap, that makes 1 ½ *d.* a week; I am only at the expense of 4 ½ *d.* per week, besides my time. The money is thus expended: I buy 1 lb. of butter, at about 9 *d.*, for the week, and about 1 ½ lb. of sugar, to the same extent; 28 lbs. of bread, at 1 ½ *d.*, and about 3 lbs. or 4 lbs. of potatoes a day; about 21 lbs. of potatoes a week, at ¾ *d.* a pound when I left Manchester; and about 7 lbs. of oatmeal, or 7 ½ lbs. at 1 *s.* 2 *d.* for 10 lbs. Then the next article is milk, about 1 ½ *d.* worth of milk per day; then as to flesh meat, I only have it once a week. and that is on the Sunday; I generally buy half a pound for my wife and family, that costs 3 ½ *d.*, and the other days we have sometimes buttermilk and potatoes, and a bit of bacon, about a quarter of a pound a day, that would be 1 ½ *d.*; some days we have it, and some days not; it costs 10 ½ *d.* per week for coal; about 3 *d.* a week for candles in summer, and in winter a considerable deal more, averaging about 8 *d.* a week for candles. As to clothing, I do as well as I can; sometimes I have some, and sometimes very litttle. To come before this Committee I had to borrow a coat and waistcoat. As to furniture in the house, I have never bought any in my life. My wife is as bad off for clothes as myself. My children have only just enough to shift, to put on clean on Sunday. Cooking utensils I never bought since I was born, only pots; I live in the same place where my father and mother occasionally lived; they are dead, and the apparatus they had when I was young I have still now. I have never had it in my power to buy any since I have been married. I do not belong to any friendly society, I could not pay it; I have all my children and myself in a penny club for burial. When ill, I have to work myself well again; I have never had a pennyworth of doctor's medicine in my body for the last three years. When my wife lies-in it costs very little; we get a midwife from the Lying-in Hospital; she has only a little gruel, and perhaps a gill of ale. As to a church seat I am not prepared to go; I wish I could go if I had got decent clothing. (*b.*)

John Scott, a broad silk weaver, says, I have been a hand-loom weaver 17 or 18 years, and 14 or nearly 15 years residing at Manchester, where the state of hand-loom weavers is very bad indeed; the wages they get are so low that they cannot obtain the necessaries of life, they cannot even buy a sufficiency of food, much less anything else; that I know as a fact, from personal observation and experience. The silk-weavers of Manchester and Salford held a meeting, to elect two persons to come up to give evidence upon the state of the silk trade there; they appointed me and another. Our names were sent up to the Chairman of this Committee. I am receiving rather better wages than the average of weavers employed in that department. The average of my wages for the last 10 or perhaps 12 months, is about 8 *s.* or 8 *s.* 4 *d.* per week. I have looms of my own, and therefore I have not to pay the charge that a journeyman has who works in another person's place, and consequently the 8 *s.* 4 *d.* is clear, with the exception of candle-light and expenses for keeping the loom in repair, shuttles dressing, additional rent and winding. Those deductions amount to about 1 *s.* 4 *d.* from 8 *s.* 4 *d.* Thus I have 7 *s.* clear for clothing, food and rent. The 1 *s.* 4 *d.* is the expense coming against me, having a loom of my own, but the expense coming against a journeyman would be a clear half-crown out of the wages that he would earn; the expenses coming against me for that journeyman's loom, for winding and necessary repairs, dressing, &c., would be about 1 *s.* 3 *d.* Supposing the loom not to be my own, the 8 *s.* 4 *d.*, which is the outside of my wages, would be reduced to at least 6 *s.* I at present pay 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a week rent, but the additional rent is paid from the profit that I have from six looms. I could never pay 3 *s.* 6 *d.* out of the net sum of my own wages, consequently I am enabled to pay the rent, when I do pay any, out of the profits which those looms bring me. A house with two rooms, one to hold one loom and a bed, and the other to live in, would be 2 *s.* 6 *d.* a week at least; therefore 2 *s.* 6 *d.* would have to be deducted from the 8 *s.* 4 *d.*, leaving 5 *s.* 8 *d.* for food and clothing and fuel. Fuel is cheap in the quarter where I live; about 10 *d.* for fuel. That would reduce my wages to 4 *s.* 10 *d.*; but I would beg the Committee to observe, I do not mean that I have only that to live upon. I have a wife and three children under seven years of age. The children earn nothing, but my wife winds for four looms; and they, when constantly going, will bring 1 *s.* a loom. Then that raises again the sum on which we have to live, from 4 *s.* 10 *d.* to 8 *s.* 10 *d.*, which however is not sufficient to enable us to enjoy the necessaries of life. With the addition of all the looms I have, even taking me as a possessor of a certain capital in looms, yet with that addition I do not get a sufficiency of the commonest of the necessaries of life; and I may add, that

(*a*) Mr. John Ashworth, 26 July 1834. Q. 7643–7657. (*b*) James Brennan, 22 July 1834. Q. 6449–6477.

Evidence of Distress.

that I am sent here as a person respectable on account of my prudence and industry and general knowledge (*c.*)

At Stockport.—*Thomas Worsley* says, the condition of the weavers in Stockport and the neighbourhood, compared with the situation in which they were many years ago, is truly deplorable. Those weavers who have not a family which are working in factories, and obtaining higher wages than they would receive at the hand-loom, are deprived of clothing to a very great extent, and continually in danger of distraining for rent; and further than that, those who have entirely to depend upon hand-loom labour may be found on the Sundays either in the fields or shut up in their houses, to prevent exposure. Observe the hand-loom weavers round, and I do not suppose one in ten will be found to attend at any place of worship. Those moral retraints which they derive from attending places of worship are now removed in consequence of their poverty. There are no means of education left for their children except the Sunday-school education, which is the greatest blessing that can possibly come to them; it is the only source of education they can possibly receive under such circumstances. But the weavers' children, along with their parents, are so destitute of clothing, that many of them are ashamed even to go to Sunday-schools. The hand-loom weavers subsist on the coarsest food; oatmeal, water porridge, onion porridge, and potatoes. The parents may drink weak tea and very little sugar in it, and eat dry bread. But even of the coarsest food they have not a sufficiency (*d.*)

At Bolton.—Mr. *Makin* says, as respects the condition of the hand-loom weavers generally in the borough of Bolton, with respect to wages and employment, their wages are lower than ever I have known them at any former period; their employment is complete; I do not suppose that there is or needs to be one weaver out of employment, and that has been the case for the last three or four years. It is not therefore from want of employment that the weavers are suffering distress, but from the want of adequate wages. The description of food the weavers are generally obliged to put up with is chiefly oatmeal porridge and potatoes, with occasionally a small quantity of butcher's meat, which they may obtain once in the course of a week. I have made a calculation by which I estimate that if a man has to support himself and his wife and five children, with the assistance of two children and his wife labouring with him, they will not be able to earn for food and clothing more than 2 ¾ *d.* per day. That is the net sum when all his rents, rates and contingent expenses on his labour are paid. I was not aware of the state of things, although I was familiarly acquainted with the trade, until I sat down, and made a calculation for myself, and I must confess that I was startled with the fact. The distress of the weavers far exceeded what I had any conception of till I made the inquiry from my own books, and from pursuing the inquiry to other sources, that enabled me to come to those conclusions. As to clothing, I cannot recollect an instance but one, where any weaver of mine has bought a new jacket for many years. They are literally clothed in rags. I am only sorry I did not bring one or two jackets to let the Committee see the average state in which they are clothed. As to their bedding, they appear to be very bare of clothing; I have known some who have had no blanket at all, merely a coarse coverlid of the value perhaps of half-a-crown when new; and as regards furniture, I have observed both on Bolton Moor and at Torkholes, where I go to manufacture, that they are generally without chairs; I have seen many houses with only two or three three-legged stools, and some I have seen without a stool or chair, with only a tea-chest to put their clothes in, and to sit upon (*e*).

At Leeds.—Mr. *Richard Oastler* says, the condition of the operatives engaged in hand-loom weaving is very poor indeed, generally speaking. What a fair weaver can earn in a week depends a good deal upon the nature of the work in which he is employed, and upon the disposition of the master by whom he is employed; there are some masters who are more desirous of keeping up the price of wages, and of enabling their weavers to earn better wages, and of encouraging them to do so, than other masters, who are giving very low wages. I know a very great body of weavers at present who live within a few miles of my own house, from seven to eight miles, who are just now unable, when in constant work, to earn clear money into their pockets more than from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* a week, but I do know other weavers who when they are in constant work just now can make 16*s.* a week. I see many scores of the weavers who are carrying their burden of yarn, when it is given to weave, from their masters to the villages on the Moors; some fetch it from Deighton, which is in the fancy trade, in our neighbourhood; with those persons I am frequently in the habit of conversing; in fact, I never see them but I always do converse with them, and I find their general condition to be, that in a fortnight (for they receive a fortnight's weft and warp at a time) they receive 12*s.* to 14*s.*, provided there be no mishap in the piece; but they have to pay out of that 12*d.* or 14*d.* for winding and the use of the loom, and for candles and for rent, which generally brings it down to what I have stated before. I have tried it in twenty different ways, and I find that the net income is about that. I remember one particular circumstance that struck me very forcibly, for it was the very day when I read the Speech of the King to this House, in which he said "the manufacturing districts were in a state of prosperity;" on that very day I met with several of those weavers, who were "manufacturing" operatives, and I questioned them very closely, and I found that on that day, when they were said to be in such a state of "prosperity," those men, and women too, were carrying burdens on their backs eight or nine miles to fetch their work, and then had to carry them back again, and they were making from 4*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* 2*d.* a week clear wages. Those persons whom I have asked say they work from 12 to 14 hours a day, according to the account they have given me; but I am speaking of weavers in constant work; I very often find them going home without work at all. I met a lot of them the week before last, and there were only three in the lot who had work. There are scores and hundreds of families in the district that I am now alluding to, to whom a piece of flesh meat is a luxury; it does not form a regular article in their daily consumption; they live generally upon porridge and potatoes, and they do not know what it is, many of them, very many of them, to taste flesh meat from year's end to year's end, excepting somebody gives them some; and their children will sometimes run to Huddersfield, and beg, and bring a piece in, and it is quite a luxury when a piece goes into their houses. But as to their clothing, they are clothed in rags; and their furniture is such, as I am sure I cannot describe, but such as a convict ought not to have. Their

(*c*) John Scott, 10 April 1835. Q. 2395–2429. (*d*) Thomas Worsley. 24 July 1834. Q. 7347–7256.
(*e*) Mr. John Makin, 17 July 1834. Q. 4972–4980.

Their food is coarser, the apparel worse, and they have less furniture than they had formerly; I think decidedly so, than when I first went into that neighbourhood; which is about 13 years ago. I have marked not only a visible declension in their circumstances, but in their spirits, and in their manners altogether. I sometimes ask them when I am walking with them, "If they go to church or chapel?" and I generally get this answer, "We have nought to go in;" and I often ask them, "Do you know whether you live in a Christian country or not?" and a great many do not know what I mean by the question; sometimes they say, "Yes, we do live in a Christian country; they tell us so." Those are not the younger class, but persons who are perhaps 20 years old, or 19 or 20, who do not know that they live in a Christian country. I have had that answer given me by scores of them; it is a question which of late I almost invariably put; because I have said that we ought to send missionaries up there. In fact, I was called upon by a member of the Methodist persuasion in Huddersfield to subscribe for a mission in this district. He told me, that "they did not know what Christianity was;" his name is Webb, he is a manufacturer (*f*).

At Nuneaton (Coventry).—*C. Hood* says, the parish of Nuneaton, owing to the depression among the hand-loom weavers in the neighbourhood, is in a very bad state indeed. There are in our parish 3,200 and odd now on the books receiving relief; and the population is 8,000, within a very few. The poor-rates in the pound are, in nine levies, two or three of them 1*s.* 6*d.* ones, about 12*s.* or 13*s.* in the pound on the whole rates of the parish. Nearly the whole of the population depend on the hand-loom weaving; there are not more I should think than three or four-score engine-looms going on. The agricultural population are in a very bad state, many of them will be ruined. There are 8,000 inhabitants, and 6,000 inhabitants depend on the hand-loom weavers. The shopkeepers, and all the persons in all the branches of the trade, and all except the farmers, almost the whole of the population, depend on the trade (*g*).

At Spitalfields.—William Hale, esq., declares, that the distress of the people has been felt; the poor have become much more distressed and indigent; they almost go in rags, and have very little to keep them, and pay very little rent. Rents have fallen very much. Many of them pay scarcely any rent at all. I remember, about seven years ago, there were a great number of houses built. Mr. Huskisson had asserted the prosperity of Spitalfields in consequence of this new measure. This induced many persons to build houses, thinking the trade would revive; a great many houses were therefore built on the plan of a ground-rent, each house paying 15*s.* or 20*s.* ground-rent; they were let for building, upon a lease of about 60 years; and those houses cost perhaps 50*l.* or 60*l.* to erect; they may be bought now for 10*s.* a house; because, if you buy them you must uphold them, and pay the ground-rent, and they are not worth the ground-rent. The tradesmen that used to supply those people are in a great deal less prosperous condition than they were formerly, and bankruptcies have occurred amongst them in consequence. The manufacturer, who was embarked in the trade, continued to go on, hoping for better times, until he was ruined; during that process, when the minimum rate was at an end, he constantly reduced the wages, in order to try to relieve himself from his difficulties. They pay in Spitalfields at 50 per cent. less journeymen's wages than they did seven years ago. I inquired last week the price of a staple article, for which I paid 10*d.* or 11*d.* a yard, for which they are now paying 4½*d.*, 5*d.* and 5½*d.* per yard. The consequence to Spitalfields of the loss of the minimum rate of wages, and an attempt to compete with foreigners, has been ruinous to the manufacturer, and reduced the wages of the workmen one-half. The effect of this competition which is attempted, without any protection whatever to the workmen, in the shape of a minimum rate of wages, is to destroy a great deal of manufacturing capital, to degrade the condition of the working people, to increase the poor-rate, to make bankrupts of persons who supply them with provisions, &c., and to produce a great deal of misery and disease, a great deal of discontent among the population, and to destroy the morals of the poor (*h*).

At Drogheda.—The weavers are compelled to live in a general way upon potatoes and salt, and nothing else; and I know it to be a real fact from experience, from my own knowledge, a man upon the inferior fabrics in Drogheda cannot earn above 3*s.* in the week in the gross, or 3*s.* 6*d.* at the outside. They are compelled to have their wives and families begging every day in the week, the men that work upon the inferior fabrics, such as what is called market work, which is sold in the hall of Drogheda, which employs a great mass of the weavers in Drogheda. Same deductions come against the lower fabric as against the higher fabric; admitting him to be a journeyman, therefore, you have 1*s.* 2*d.* to deduct from the 3*s.* 6*d.*, that leaves 2*s.* 4*d.*; the deduction to be made from the 2*s.* 4*d.*, is 5*d.* for the lodging, and 2*d.* for washing his shirt. In fact, our wages now are not sufficient to give us the enjoyment of the common necessaries of life, not by any chance (*i*).

If it were necessary to have any proof of the decline of the trade, here is a report of the seal master at Drogheda, which shows a considerable reduction.

A RETURN of the LINEN sealed in the *Drogheda* Market, commencing the 6th of January 1820, and ending the 4th January 1834.

For the year	1820	53,697	pieces.
—	1821	61,866	—
—	1822	61,246	—
—	1823	50,603	—
—	1824	41,944	—
—	1825	43,573	—
—	1826	32,795	—
—	1827	25,244	—
For the year	1828	20,018	pieces.
—	1829	16,645	—
—	1830	20,659	—
—	1831	20,816	—
—	1832	16,566	—
—	1833	19,910	—
—	1834	19,524	—

(*k*)

For

(*f*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3736–3754. (*g*) Charles Hood, 14 April 1835. Q. 3983–3997.
(*h*) W. Hale, Esq. 12 July 1834. Q. 4158–4165. (*i*) P. M'Gray, 11 April 1835. Q. 2827–2836.
(*k*) Mr. J. Chadwick, 11 April 1835. Q. 2799.

For *Belfast* the following was given in evidence:—

The lowest rate at which a weaver can support himself, his wife and two children, per week, shows an outlay, for one man, his wife and two of a family, of—

	s.	d.
10 stone of coals, at 1 ½ *d.* per stone	1	3
Loom rent	1	–
[This statement does not include the rent of the house; it is only the rent or cost for the wear and tear.]		
¾ stone of oatmeal	1	3
1 lb. candles for the shop	–	6
½ lb. candles for the house	–	3
3 stone of potatoes	–	7 ½
Sour milk, eight quarts	–	4
Eight herrings	–	4
½ oz. tea and ½ lb. sugar	–	5 ½
Bread	–	4
½ lb. soap	–	2 ½
£.	6	5 ½

House-rent rates as follows:
Two-loom shop, with the necessary accommodations, from 5*l.* to 5*l.* 10*s.* per annum.

The income to meet this expenditure is, per week, two pieces of a 16⁰⁰, 5*s.* 4*d.*; loom, 6*s.*; winding ditto, 8*d.*; total income, 6*s.* 8*d.* There is no allowance made for twisting, nor for any deduction of work by the employer. This is the very highest price paid at Belfast for that fabric. But the greatest number of the weavers in our district are compelled to live at a less rate of expenditure than 6*s.* 5 ½*d.*; indeed, I would say that is as much, under the same circumstances, as any of them have.

The majority of weavers is in a great state of want and destitution in our district. They have not the means to dress as well as they used to do; and very few attend divine service as much as they used to do (*l*).

Wherever you take hand-loom weaving, either in worsted, flax or woollen, their wages are lower than any other workmen in any other branch; generally that is the case, according to the best of my knowledge; from all the inquiry I have made of the weavers, I find that their trade is lower than any other branch (*m*).

Mr. *Fielden*, M. P. for Oldham, says, it will be seen, on reference to the evidence, that a very great number of the weavers are unable to provide for themselves and their families a sufficiency of food of the plainest and cheapest kind; that they are clothed in rags, and indisposed on this account to go to any place of worship, or to send their children to the Sunday schools; that they have scarcely anything like furniture in their houses; that their beds and bedding are of the most wretched description, and that many of them sleep upon straw; that notwithstanding their want of food, clothing, furniture and bedding, they for the most part have full employment; that their labour is excessive, not unfrequently 16 hours a day; that this state of destitution and excessive labour induces them to drink ardent spirits to revive their drooping spirits and allay their sorrows, whereby their suffering is increased; that their poverty and wretchedness cause many to embezzle, and sell the materials entrusted to them to be worked up, and that to such an extent has this now gone, that there are now notoriously receiving-houses at which the weavers can exchange such embezzled materials for spirits, victuals and money; and that there are manufacturers who buy of these receivers the principal part of the weft which they manufacture, thus destroying the morals of the weavers, the tradespeople with whom they deal, and even of the manufacturers themselves; that this, it is said, requires a stronger legal remedy than that now in force to check it. Yet the intelligent manufacturer, Mr. Makin, of Bolton, who suggested an amendment of the law, overpowered by his feelings, stated distinctly, that he could not recommend such amendment of the law, unless it was accompanied by some measure that would secure better wages to the weaver for his labour. That being placed in these deplorable circumstances, they dreaded the operation that would be consequent on the Poor Law Amendment Bill then going through the House. That although there is a great difference in the wages paid by different masters for the same sort of work, in some cases 50 per cent., a grievance of which the witnesses complain and desire a remedy for, and although the masters paying the better wages are sometimes disposed to increase the number of their weavers, yet the poverty of many weavers compels them to work for the masters who pay the lower wages, being tied to them from being in their debt for money lent, which it was agreed should be repaid to them by a small stoppage out of the weaver's wages every time he delivered in any finished work, which stoppage out of wages the weaver's poverty often induces him to intreat his master to postpone. The tie is thus prolonged, fresh loans are made before the previous ones are repaid, and the hold the low-paying master has on his weaver is thus continued. Another difficulty the weaver has in changing his employer is, that he is too poor to defray the expense of new gears and implements, such as the change requires, and to lose the time that he necessarily must do in changing his employer and his work. The case of these weavers therefore appears to be hopeless, unless some measure of relief be enacted by the legislature. Many of the witnesses gave it as their decided conviction, that the poverty of the weavers had been the fruitful cause of the establishment of trades' unions amongst other artizans, who, seeing the extreme destitution the weavers were reduced to by successive reductions of wages, united for their mutual protection to avoid falling into the same wretched condition.

Nor is the distress confined to the mere weavers; the above authority remarks, a great many whom I have known, who were formerly manufacturers, have been reduced to poverty and want themselves. I have known several manufacturers who used to accompany me to market, whose children

(*l*) John Boyd, 3 April 1835. Q. 1130-1159.

(*m*) David Brook, 28 June 1834. Q. 461.

PART I. Distress. Sect. 2. Results of Distress.

dren, owing to the distressed condition they have been reduced to, and the change of things that has taken place, have some of them been transported for crime, others imprisoned, and others thrown upon the parish, in order to obtain support. A number that used to accompany myself, when I first commenced manufacturer, and going to the market that my father had attended, have been reduced to poverty and want equally as bad as any of the weavers that have come up here. I think three-fourths of the manufacturers at least, in the neighbourhood where I reside, have been reduced to poverty in the manner I have stated. Those parties were persons quite as industrious and economical as the manufacturing body in general are (*n*).

Sect. 2. Results of Distress.

Section II.—*Results of the Distress.*

Mr. *Makin* observes, I think the state of society is unsafe without some mode of relief being devised, inasmuch as if the process of reduction keeps going on it must drive the rising population to a state of abandonment; and if it had not been for Sunday schools, society would have been in a horrible state before this time, for the parents cannot attend places of worship, and infidelity is growing amazingly; I know that for a fact, that the writings of Carlile and Taylor and other infidels are more read than the Bible or any other book. I hold a religious education to have been the saving of the country. Yet I have seen weeks after weeks the weavers assembled in a room, that would contain 400 people, to applaud the people who asserted and argued that there was no God. I know as a fact, that I have gone into the cottages around the chapel where I worship, I have found 20 men assembled reading infidel publications, and that within sight of the chapel. I will ballot the population, and three out of four shall give their voice against going to any place of worship, or listening to any minister, or obeying any laws. The fact is, they have not clothes, it has originated in the first instance in that; but I know as a fact, that Taylor and Carlile have been able to go about and collect rent, the same as the Methodist ministers collect from their classes. That is a system that must go on from bad to worse.

I think that will have a tendency to distract the mind, and keep it from a comfortable attention to speculative and moral knowledge; and that it will become physically weakened, for want of that nourishment it should have from time to time; and that to give it too long exertion in damp places, to which the hand-loom weavers are subjected, operates upon them physically; it is the case with many. In some places they cannot attend places of public worship. I have known not less than 1,000 that have attended no church, no chapel, no school, just merely from want of dress. They would rather stay in the house on Sunday than expose their necessities to their neighbours and other people, and that is known to thousands. The physical powers of the weaver are impaired by inadequate subsistence and long confinement, and his mind is also greatly deteriorated from the infirmities and disappointments that grow out of such a state of things. I know, as to the weavers in general, taking them 20 years ago, I could find a great deal more intelligence among them than I can now. I find amongst those who have grown up many exceedingly intelligent, but among those who are in youth, I cannot charge my memory with finding any degree of intelligence at all, not even that of reading well. I do not say it does not exist, but it is not to such a degree as to have attracted my attention. I consider that the moral and religious culture of the people may be strictly compared to the cultivation of the fields, where a person who has the management of a field exhausts its power and productiveness, and takes no pains to put it in a condition for reproducing advantageously again. I think the analogy of the case is very strong (*o*).

Mr. *J. Ashworth* says, poverty produces immorality; and I think extreme poverty, strange as it may appear, increases drunkenness: many of the poor people having very little fire, and no comfortable food or clothing, and especially in the winter, to keep them warm, they get into a reckless condition; they want something to give them comfort, and they think a glass of gin would help them to it, and from that they get habits of drinking. Besides, I am acquainted with many poor people, who say to me when I call upon them, "We have not the same religious privileges that other people have who are better off." "Why not?" "We are not able to contribute to the support of the minister of religion, nor to pay for a seat in a place of worship." I say, "There are free sittings." "We do not like to go there." They feel it a degradation; they rather wish to be properly independent, by being justly remunerated for their work, so as to be able to pay for a sitting, and contribute to the support of the minister. One of the great evils of any class of society becoming impoverished is, that it obliterates those feelings of independence, and brings men into a state of degradation, recklessness and vice; and if we could inspire them with a spirit of independence, and this would be done if they were in a condition to provide for themselves, they would be what Englishmen ought to be (*p*).

John Boyd says, as regards the weavers at Belfast, through a long series of privation and suffering, the energy of mind they were formerly possessed of is broken; they see nothing before them but the withering prospect of hopeless destitution and suffering, and under existing circumstances, should the provision increase in price, it would be out of human knowledge to anticipate the results (*q*).

William Longson observes, the weavers might emigrate; considering that they were not protected by society, they would consider themselves to be released from all the obligations of society. As long as they pay taxes and conduct themselves as liege subjects, they have just as much claim to have their property, which is labour, protected, as any other class in the British empire: that is their conception; and I see nothing against it, but everything the other way. The pressure of taxation and the diminution of their wages has caused a great deal of the trades' unions, and the combinations and disturbances that have taken place; that celebrated affair in 1819, I do not believe it would ever have taken place if it had not been for the distress of the weavers; those politics you denominate radical originated amongst them, and the publications in which they are conveyed were first sold to them, and thus handed to other members of the community. Those proceedings at Manchester would not have taken place if it had not been for the distress of the weavers; and an honourable

(*n*) John Fielden, Esq., M.P. 12 March 1835. Q. 48–50. (*o*) Mr. John Makin, 18 July 1834. Q. 5351–5356. 6866–6868.
(*p*) Mr. John Ashworth, 26 July 1834. Q. 7874, 7875. (*q*) John Boyd, 6 April 1835. Q. 1217.

honourable Member of the Committee will recollect, in the course of a few months after, a very heavy reduction in wages; these meetings commenced in Manchester, and you all know what has followed; with regard to the weavers, the trades' unions do not recognise weavers; I believe there are some weavers belonging to the trades' unions in some distant towns, but I do not know any of the weavers belonging to trades' unions at Stockport but myself; but what might they recommend to the trades' unions, being driven to desperation, and driven to all the results of necessity, and conceiving themselves to be released from the common social bond or tie or obligation, by the want of what they consider to be necessary, moral and legal protections? what effect might they have had, supposing they were in any consolidated union of their own, or to join others?

The natural consequences of destitution and want demoralize, on the one hand, in taking away or preventing the means of instruction; and what is much worse, taking away perhaps the relish for moral or mental culture; that is worse than taking away the means, taking away the desire. When wages are low, people frequently go to the public-house to converse upon the cause, the object and the remedy; and on the other hand, people will not go for want of means, and those causes operate contrary the one to the other. There will be every other diminution of their moral character that can result from privation and from the want of every means of moral improvement. The same rule operates with regard to the poor that does upon the rich; they feel like a rich man who has gambled his property away, and is in distress, and tries to drown his reflections in wine, or any other means he can get, to banish it from his mind. The same operation may take place with the weaver who is in distress; and, at the same time, that in the days of prosperity, that the weaver, like a wealthy gentleman engaged in cricket or in fox-hunting, or in any other amusement that has excited him, or led him to meetings for convivial purposes, may occasion the weaver to rejoice over the prosperity of his circumstances, and make him indulge in the consumption of spirits. I think the means of purchasing what he conceives will exhilarate and give pleasure for the moment, will be an inducement to them; and, on the other hand, melancholy reflections on Saturday night: if you take a weaver, or other operative, he has not a parlour to go and sit down in, and it is not considered by some gentlemen more immediately engaged with the inquiry into the causes of drunkenness, that on Saturday night the woman and the daughters have the place quite wet; where is the man to go? he does not like to go in there, in their road, he will just go out; and to suppose all the weavers are getting drunk, because many get drunk on Saturday night, is quite erroneous: but in regard to many, mental distress does operate upon them on Saturday night to go out; he will stay away from complaint; Saturday night is when wages should come in, and the lamentations of the wife are loudest then, and that is the best time for him to go where he will find some person as much rejoiced as he is depressed. From want of clothes, and want of fuel, an artisan may take to the use of spirits to warm himself, without even doing it at all for the purposes of intoxicating, or any other cause than to enable him to bear his work and support the difficulties of his situation; to buoy up the spirits against reflection. I have known instances of it, to chase away care. If a weaver is going from a neighbouring village to Manchester upon a wet day, he is so badly clothed now that he is more likely to take a glass of spirits than if he had a good umbrella over his head and good clothes (*r*).

Philip Halliwell feelingly remarks, I heard the statement of the witness yesterday, that he dreaded that if there was no relief given, the people would abandon the respect for machinery, and be apt to look upon that as the great cause of their sufferings. I heard what he said upon that subject. It is a delicate question to ask, and I feel a delicacy in giving an opinion upon it; but it is morally impossible to say what will be the result of men driven to despair. I speak feelingly upon the subject, as a man in these circumstances; I view the present Poor Law Amendment Bill as a system of coercion upon the poor man, and that very shortly I shall be under its dreadful operation. I have not merited these things. I am a loyal man, strongly attached to the institutions of my country, and a lover of my country. "England, with all thy faults, I love thee still," is the language of my soul. Here I am, and here I will remain as long as I live, let the consequences be what they may. I am a friend to social order, and I never shall act upon any other principle myself; but I cannot think I have a right tamely to submit to perish without a struggle; and I am confident, that unless something is done to prevent it, any accidental cause, such as an advance of price of provisions or a deficiency of crops, must bring thousands of us to a premature grave. This is the exact state of things (*s*).

Mr. *R. Oastler* thinks that this country is placed in very imminent danger. The working class of society seem to have greatly fallen off in their allegiance to the Government of this country, because they feel that they are not protected by the Government of this country; and in my opinion, although they have no wish whatever to enter into any political strifes or any disturbances of any sort, they are by their distresses driven to that state, that they might be made the tools of very designing men (*t*).

Richard Needham says, machines of themselves are not productive of harm: no, it is the abuse of them; I am asked to show the consequences; if I am an honest man I must state my opinion; these people will not reason, they are in that state they have lost their reasoning powers; when they are brought into a state of starvation and famine, they will rush upon what they believe to be the cause; I do not say it is right, God forbid.

We are calculated at 280,000, depending upon the hand-loom for a living, and most of those 280,000 are without shirts, their wives and children are without garments and without bedding; all those people, if they had adequate wages, would be able to get beds and apparel, and all that was necessary to make them comfortable; we should not need to go to a foreign market to dispose of the produce of their labour; my opinion is, that it would take 40,000 hands to provide them with what is necessary to make them comfortable in clothing alone (*u*).

Mr. *Thomas Myerscough* has seen that poverty has had the effect to deteriorate their character; they have been led into a variety of practices not in accordance with good morals: it has tended to the increase of crime generally (*x*).

Mr.

(*r*) William Longson, 24 July 1834. Q. 7230–7242.
(*s*) Philip Halliwell, 19 July 1834. Q. 5185.
(*t*) Mr. R. Oastler. Q. 3821.
(*u*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5471. 5594.
(*x*) Mr. Thomas Myerscough. Q. 4487, 4488.

Mr. *Montgomery Martin* says, I have visited countries where the population engaged in manufactories seem to be, upon the whole, in a better condition than the manufacturing population of this country. I may take one as an example, the large manufacturing population round Rouen, where the working people bear no comparison with the manufacturers of this country; they are a fine healthy set of cheerful Frenchmen, and an athletic race, while the squalid, filthy, wretched looking population of Manchester, Macclesfield, Leeds, Sheffield and other towns, is a disgrace to this country.

There is no doubt that some of the manufacturing community drink largely; I ascribe that to their being overworked, and to the consequent desire, under such circumstances, for an ardent stimulant, or a stimulus of some kind; and I believe that that consumption of ardent spirits has been caused by taking away from them, or preventing their use, of a more wholesome stimulant, malt liquor; if, therefore, the manufacturing communities which are well paid were not enervated by over work, and if they could have got malt liquor at a moderate price, they would not have resorted to gin and whiskey. Having been absent from Europe 10 years, I have had an opportunity of drawing a comparison as to the physical deterioration in the manufacturing districts, and nothing struck me with more horror than the deterioration in the appearance of the population; I have observed it not only in the manufacturing but also in agricultural communities in this country; they seem to have lost their animation, their vivacity, their field games and their village sports; they have become a sordid, discontented, miserable, anxious, struggling people, without health, or hope, or happiness. This has been in a great measure occasioned by their hours of labour being extended. The extension of the hours of labour has been owing to the necessity which arose for greater exertion to acquire more of the means of subsistence, and extreme labour took away from them that gaiety of spirit which is natural to man, and which supports his mind; and when the Sabbath (the poor man's holiday) came round, he was induced to resort to dram-drinking to forget his misery, to remember his poverty no more.

I watched the progress of the cholera on its introduction into this country, and I invariably found it carried off a weak and impoverished population rapidly, while those who were in active employment, and had a sufficiency of the necessaries of life, most generally escaped; the observation has been not merely confined to England, for I have observed in different parts of the globe epidemics have spread, and endemics originated amongst the distressed population. Moreover physical distress has a tendency of itself to make the people discontented in their minds from their mere bodily feelings, as well as disposed from feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction to be accessible to persons who have revolutionary projects in view, to respect less the laws, and probably the general well-being and honour of their country. A diseased state of the social mass of course renders it more irritable, more accessible to a demagogue, more readily inflammable for receiving exciting language and topics of passionate address, uttered by designing men; the discontented state of this country for several years has led to the mass of the people looking to anything that offers a chance of bettering their condition.

If by any means we could give a greater degree of importance and comfort to the great masses of the working classes, the country would consider more deliberately, and press less unreasonably upon the public and upon the Government, and thereby give them more time to procure and effectuate good legislative measures: it is a truism so self-evident as to require no corroborative testimony. Many persons in the middling or higher classes of life having become bankrupt, are now less disposed to support the institutions of the country, as well as less able, or even sometimes take a part in encouraging those publications and those feelings which are so embarrassing to the Government, and so dangerous to the peace and tranquillity of the country. I think very many persons of the middle and lower classes are seeking for a change, as a sick and diseased man does any relief which gives him a prospect of freedom from his malady, and that there is a great deal of irritating language applied to the mass of people for that very purpose; I mean that many of the intelligent classes would stimulate the passions of the poor for the purpose of effecting any change which would offer them the prospect of an advantage (*y*).

The foregoing presents the leading features of the lamentable distress pervading so large a class of our fellow-subjects; and I now proceed to analyze the causes assigned for such wide-spread misery.

(*y*) R. M. Martin, Esq., 11 July 1334. Q. 4106. 3955-3957. 3985, 3986. 3991, 3992.

PART II.

CAUSES OF DISTRESS.

Section 1.—Reduction of Wages.
2.—Over-production of Goods.
3.—Competition at Home and Abroad.
4.—Want of Combination.
5.—Machinery.
6.—The Power Loom.
7.—Taxation.
8.—Corn Laws.
9.—Currency.
10.—Slaughter-houses; Embezzlement; Smuggling; and Cotton Twist Exportation.

Section I.—*Reduction of Wages.*

THE primary cause assigned by the whole of the witnesses for the existing distress is the reduction which has taken place in the prices of weaving; but this should more properly be considered as an effect resulting from some operating cause. However, as the point has been much dwelt on, I proceed to give the evidence on the subject.

Mr. *Fielden* says, It is allowed by all, that the immediate cause of this distress has been unfair reduction of wages, by a few manufacturers in the first instance, but of necessity adopted by others, who had a strong aversion to it, whereby has resulted reduction after reduction, and the present state of things. Mr. Needham, of Bolton, in his Evidence, p. 432 of the Report, gave in to the Committee a statement of wages for weaving six-fourths, 60-reed cambrics, at Bolton, the average being taken for seven years together, from 1797 to 1834, together with the average price paid for flour, meal, potatoes, butcher's meat and rent for the same period, all extracted from his master's book, and from the workhouse book. This table shows in a clear and conclusive manner the downward progress that has taken place in the condition of the hand-loom weavers, arising out of successive reductions of wages. This statement of decline is confirmed by every witness prepared to go into detail. Mr. Needham gave in a table, in which he stated the rent of a four-loom house, for the period I named, from 1797 up to the time he gave his evidence, dividing that time into periods of seven years each; and I have taken down from that evidence what I will now read to the Committee, and I think then that no honourable Member will be at a loss to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion in his own mind, that the distress given in evidence by the hand-loom weavers has not been in any way overcharged. In this table he gives the rent which the weaver had to pay, and the number of pieces it required to pay his rent during each successive seven years. In the first seven years, the price he had for weaving *six pieces* would pay his rent; in the second seven years, it required him to weave *nine pieces* to pay his rent; in the third seven years, *twelve and one-third pieces*; in the fourth seven years, *sixteen pieces*; in the fifth seven years, *twenty-two pieces*; and in the two last years, *twenty-five pieces*. The weaver had to weave those to enable him to pay the rent for a four-loom house; that is, such a house as he could put four looms in, and work them. Then he gives in each of those successive periods, taken from the workhouse book, in the town of Bolton, the quantity of flour which one week's work would purchase, the quantity of oatmeal that one week's work would purchase, the quantity of potatoes that one week's work would purchase, and the quantity of butcher's meat that one week's work would purchase. In doing this, he takes the price of wages for weaving one piece of six-fourths Bolton cambric, 120 shots per inch, and 24 yards in length; and this work he states, which was confirmed by other witnesses from the neighbourhood, is a good week's work for a weaver. I will now read the result of the abstract I have made from this table. The first seven years the weaver got 26*s.* 8*d.* for weaving one piece; this is from 1797 to 1804. That sum would purchase him 100 lbs. of flour, *or* 142 lbs. of oatmeal, *or* 826 lbs. of potatoes, *or* 55 lbs. of butcher's meat, making a general average of 281 lbs. The next period of seven years goes from 1804 to 1811; the average wages in that period of seven years was 20*s.*, which in the seven years preceding had been 26*s.* 8*d.*, showing a decline in money of 25 per cent. The flour that money would purchase would be 79 lbs.; oatmeal, 115 lbs.; potatoes, 720 lbs.; and of butcher's meat, 38 lbs.; and, taking the general average of those four articles he would be able to purchase 238 lbs., whereas in the seven years preceding, he could purchase 281 lbs. This shows a decline in his command over the necessaries of life in the second period of seven years, as compared with the first period, of 16 ⅔ per cent. I wish just to state here, that it has been often observed that, though the money wages for weaving have fallen, yet the price of the necessaries of life have fallen also; and that, on that account, the condition of the weaver is not so wretched as it has been represented, and to put this in its true light, I have shown in this table the money wages, the decline in those wages, and also the decline in the command he had over the necessaries of life, that is, over the purchase of flour, oatmeal, potatoes and butcher's meat, from the money he received. This is the result of my own calculation from the table delivered in by Mr. Needham. In the third period of seven years, the wages of the weaver, which had been 26*s.* 8*d.* in the first period, and 20*s.* in the second period, was reduced to 14*s.* 7*d.* in this third period; that is, his money wages, showing a decline in money of 27 per cent. between the third period, as compared with the second, and 45 per cent. as compared with the first period. This 14*s.* 7*d.* would purchase him 60 lbs. of flour, 79 lbs. of oatmeal, 360 lbs. of potatoes, or 26 lbs. of butcher's meat, giving a general average of 131 lbs., whereas in the second period his wages would purchase him 238 lbs., and in the first period 281 lbs. This shows a decline in the third seven years, as compared with the second seven years, of 45 per cent.; and as compared with the first seven years of 55 ⅓ per cent., in his command over the necessaries of life. I will now take the fourth seven years, from 1818 to 1825. His wages, which had been 14*s.* 7*d.* in the period ending in 1818, was reduced to 8*s.* 9*d.* This sum would purchase him 48 lbs. of flour, 64 lbs. of oatmeal, 300 lbs. of potatoes

potatoes, or 20 lbs. of butcher's meat; and, taking the average of each, it would be 108 lbs. against 131 lbs. in the former period; that is, the period immediately preceding. This shows a decline in money wages of 40 per cent. as compared with the third period, and 63 per cent. as compared with the second period; and the decline in his command over the necessaries of life is 17 ½ per cent. in this period as compared with the preceding seven years, and 61 ½ per cent. as compared with the first seven years. I now come to the fifth seven years, beginning with 1825 and ending with 1832. The average wages of the weaver for those seven years was 6 *s.* 4 *d.* against 8 *s.* 9 *d.* which he had in the seven years preceding; that shows a decline in money of 27 ½ per cent. as compared with the seven years immediately preceding, and 76 per cent. as compared with the first period. This would purchase him 38 lbs. of flour, 48 lbs. of oatmeal, 230 lbs. of potatoes, or 15 lbs. of butcher's meat; an equal proportion of each of those things would be 83 lbs. against 108 lbs. in the period immediately preceding; and the decline in this fifth seven years as compared with the fourth is 23 per cent., and as compared with the first seven years, 70 ½ per cent., in his command over the necessaries of life. The last period given in Mr. Needham's table is two years, from 1832 to 1835.* The wages in this period, of which the average in the seven years preceding had been 6 *s.* 4 *d.*, is now reduced to 5 *s.* 6 *d.*; but it is fair to observe, that the wages were reduced in 1829 to 5 *s.* 6 *d.* The fifth period of seven years into which he divides his table extends to 1832. If it had ended in 1829 the wages would have been much higher, taking the seven years immediately preceding 1829; 5 *s.* 6 *d.* have been the wages for the last six years, I believe; but that is stated fully in the evidence in the tables (Mr. Makin's of Bolton) given in of the wages from 1797 up to the period that the witnesses gave their evidence. Taking these last two years, and comparing them with the preceding seven years ending in 1832, the decline in money as compared with the fifth period is 13 per cent., and as compared with the first period, 79 ½ per cent. In those two years his weekly wages would purchase him 40 lbs. of flour, 58 lbs. of oatmeal, 220 lbs. of potatoes, or 14 lbs. of butcher's meat; and, taking the average, it is the same as it was in the seven years preceding, 83 lbs.; and the decline in this period as compared with the first seven years, in the command which his money wages would give him over the necessaries of life, is 70 ½ per cent. I now put in the table which I have referred to, and which I have deduced from Mr. Needham's table, given in his evidence, pages 432 and 433:—

From 1797 to 1804:

1st 7 years - -	100 lbs.	flour,	Wages for weaving 1 piece, 24 yards, of 6-4ths Bolton cambric, 120 shots per inch (say one week's work for a weaver), 26 *s.* 8 *d.*
	142	oatmeal,	
	826	potatoes,	
	55	butcher's meat.	
	4) 1,123		
General average	281		

From 1804 to 1811:

2d 7 years - -	79 lbs.	flour,	Wages in this period for the same, 20 *s.* Decline in money 25 per cent.
	115	oatmeal,	
	720	potatoes,	
	38	butcher's meat.	
	4) 952		
General average	238	- Decline per cent. in second seven years, as compared with first, 16 ⅓, in the command the weaver had over the necessaries of life.	

From 1811 to 1818:

3d 7 years - -	60 lbs.	flour,	Wages in this period for the same, 14 *s.* 7 *d.* Decline in money 27 per cent. compared with second period, and 45 per cent. as compared with first period.
	79	oatmeal,	
	360	potatoes,	
	26	butcher's meat.	
	4) 525		
	131	- Decline in third seven years, as compared with second seven years, 45 per cent., and as compared with first seven years, 55 ⅓ per cent.	

From 1818 to 1825:

4th 7 years - -	48 lbs.	flour,	Wages in this period for the same, 8 *s.* 9 *d.* Decline in money 40 per cent. as compared with third period, and 63 per cent. as compared with second period.
	64	oatmeal,	
	300	potatoes,	
	20	butcher's meat.	
	4) 432		
	108	- Decline in fourth seven years, as compared with third seven years, 17 ½ per cent., and as compared with first seven years, 61 ½ per cent.	

From

From 1825 to 1832:

5th 7 years - - 38 lbs. flour, 48 oatmeal, 230 potatoes, 15 butcher's meat. } Wages in this period for the same, 6 *s.* 4 *d.* Decline in money 27 ½ per cent. as compared with fourth period, and 76 per cent. as compared with first period.

4) 331

83 - Decline in fifth seven years, as compared with fourth seven years, 23 per cent., and as compared with first seven years, 70 ½ per cent.

From 1832 to 1835:

6th period - - 40 lbs. flour, 58 oatmeal, 220 potatoes, 14 butcher's meat. } Wages in this period for the same, 5 *s.* 6 *d.* Decline in money, as compared with fifth period, 13 per cent., and 79 ½ per cent. compared with first period.

4) 332

83 - Decline in this period, as compared with first seven years, 70 ½ per cent. (*a*)

Mr. *Thomas Myerscough* says, when I went to Bolton was in 1811, the wages paid for a certain sort of quilt was 11 *s.* for two or three years forward; then it was reduced to 9 *s.*, then to 7 *s.* 6 *d.*, then to 6 *s.*, and now to 5 *s.* (*b*).

The reduction of wages has not been confined to England; according to the evidence of Mr. Chadwick, there are now 1,600 to 1,800 hand-looms in Drogheda; there were 25 years ago I should think at least 5,000 engaged in linen, and perhaps nearly as many in cotton, but the manufacture has declined very much from about the year 1816 up to 1830. Yet the power-loom has not been applied to the linen manufacture at all; there may have been some experiments, but I believe with very little success. The power-loom has affected the hand-loom weavers in the linen branch, because the cotton goods made by power-looms are of so superior a fabric to what were made by hand-loom, that they have superseded the use of linens. At the time when our trade began to decline, we attributed it to the commencement of the manufacture in Yorkshire, and afterwards in Scotland; and another circumstance was, the lessening of the export demand. Previously to that there was an export of linens to Spanish America; and that demand has since ceased gradually; it was taken out of our hands by the Yorkshire manufacturer. The reduction of wages, compared with the wages in 1812, if you take into account the increase in the length of the piece, will show 15 yards have been added to the piece, and the wages are reduced more than one half. Thus there is a declension of upwards of 50 per cent. in the wages, notwithstanding an increase in the length of the piece of 20 per cent.

A LIST of the PRICES of GREY YARN, WEAVING and CLOTH, in the *Drogheda* Market.

YEAR.	Price per lb. of best Grey Yarns.	Price of Weaving 27 inches wide Linen, per Piece.	Price of Linen in the bleached state, in the Drogheda Market.
	d.	*s.* *d.*	*d.*
1812 - - -	17 per lb.	78 yards wove for - 15 –	Sold at 16 ¾ per yard.
1813 - - -	16 ½ —	78 - — - - 15 –	— 17 ½ —
1814 - - -	18 ¼ —	78 - — - - 17 10	— 16 ½ —
1815 - - -	16 ½ —	78 - — - - 15 –	— 17 ½ —
1816 - - -	14 ½ —	78 - — - - 13 –	— 12 ½ —
1817 - - -	12 ¼ —	78 - — - - 10 –	— 12 ½ —
1818 - - -	14 —	83 - — - - 12 –	— 13 ¼ —
1819 - - -	14 ¾ —	83 - — - - 11 –	— 13 —
1820 - - -	11 ½ —	83 - — - - 10 –	— 12 —
1821 - - -	10 ½ —	83 - — - - 12 –	— 11 —
1822 - - -	12 —	83 - — - - 10 –	— 10 —
1823 - - -	13 —	83 - — - - 9 2	— 10 —
1824 - - -	12 ½ —	83 - — - - 8 –	— 10 ¼ —
1825 - - -	12 —	88 - — - - 9 –	— 9 ¾ —
1826 - - -	9 ¾ —	88 - — - - 8 –	— 8 ½ —
1827 - - -	11 ½ —	88 - — - - 7 6	— 8 —
1828 - - -	9 ½ —	88 - — - - 7 6	— 7 ½ —
1829 - - -	9 ½ —	88 - — - - 7 –	— 7 ¼ —
1830 - - -	9 ½ —	88 - — - - 7 –	— 6 ¾ —
1831 - - -	9 —	88 - — - - 7 –	— 7 ¼ —
1832 - - -	9 —	88 - — - - 7 –	— 7 —
1833 - - -	8 ½ —	93 - — - - 7 –	— 6 ¾ —
1834 - - -	8 ½ —	93 - — - - 7 –	— 6 ¾ —
1835 (*c*) - -	10 —	92 - — - - 7 –	— 7 ¼ —

From this reduction of wages the operative is unable to escape; owing to the poverty of the weaver, he is very frequently in debt to the man who employs him, and dare not leave him, however much he may reduce his wages, because he is his debtor, and therefore his slave. My wife laid in three

(*a*) John Fielden, esq., M.P., 12 March 1835. (*b*) Mr. Thomas Myerscough. Q. 4587.
(*c*) Mr. J. Chadwick, 11 April 1835. Q. 2718-2738.

PART II. CAUSES OF DISTRESS. Sect. 1. Reduction of Wages.

three years past, and I had not so much as to make a dish of gruel for her. I was within a few yards of finishing a cut, and I went to the warehouse and borrowed 10 *s.*; soon after that there was better work sprung up in the town, but I could not leave for six months, till I had paid it off. At this time, in consequence of the long continued poverty and wretchedness of the weavers, they are, in point of fact, not only compelled to take whatever the master chooses to give them, but they cannot leave the hard and grinding master to go to a less hard and grinding one, because they are in debt to him, and dare not do it; and I will add a little more to it, that when a man changes from one line to another, it adds to his expenses; there is the expense of drawing, which is perhaps 2 *s.* or 1 *s.* 6 *d.*; and by getting a fresh piece, he loses a whole week; whereas if he works for his old master, he had only to bring home the warp and twist it in (*d*).

It has been asserted that this downward progression of wages cannot be avoided, and that the wages of labour must find their own level; this proposition is thus met by a weaver:—My opinion is, that labour is not a commodity; that if a commodity, instead of being like every other commodity, it is like no other commodity; every other commodity when brought to market, if you cannot get the price intended, it may be taken out of the market, and taken home, and brought and sold another day; but if a day's labour is offered on any day, and is not sold on that day, that day's labour is lost to the labourer and to the whole community; and therefore labour, instead of being like every other commodity, is like no other commodity in that respect, and in some other respects; and I beg leave, therefore, to decline drawing any of the usual inferences that are drawn from that supposed maxim, or whatever it has been called. With regard to its being a commodity, it has not the essentials of any other commodity; it is not a commodity with regard to ponderosity and figure, and some other things; and as to labour, labour gives to substance its figure, and some of its desirable qualities; but having been asked a similar question once before, and having been obliged to examine it, I can only say I should be as ready to call a verb a substantive as any longer to call labour a commodity (*e*).

SECTION II.—*Over-Production.*

Sect. 2. Over-production of Goods.

THIS, the second alleged cause of distress, necessarily springs from the preceding, as thus shown: The reduction of the rate of wages tends to increase the labour of the workman; thus the more you reduce wages, the more you increase the production of commodity, and the more you reduce the prices of the commodity. The reduction of wages tends to make the depression of prices still greater; it becomes a matter of absolute necessity, that if the weaver has been accustomed to do a certain quantity of work for so much money, and his wages are reduced, that he must try to get as much money by doing so much more work; therefore it follows, depression of trade increases the produce of the commodity, and therefore the increase of produce is no proof of the prosperity of any particular trade (*f*).

The manufacturer, by taking advantage of the poverty of the weavers, gets rid of a part of the glut he has himself created by giving low wages, and sends it out of the country that he may keep up the value of a part of his property by the loss of the other; he makes up the loss he incurs in the foreign trade from his profits on the home trade. The more you create an excess of supply of the commodities made up by an over-worked population, in so far you diminish the demand for their labour in producing that article; you diminish their wages and you increase their labour to enable them to purchase a sufficiency of food. If one man works 16 hours instead of 12, he takes away four hours' employment from another; such is the result of an unnatural stimulus.

The labouring classes of this country, as regards the weavers, have been forced to work at any wages that would keep body and soul together; and the reduction of wages which has been going on led to an increase in the production of goods, and thereby rendered this country more dependant on foreign trade than it otherwise would have been; it has necessarily caused increased production; a man labouring for eight hours a day and finding he does not earn a subsistence will labour for 12 hours, or as long as is necessary, therefore increased production has been the result, and there being a surplus quantity made, foreign markets have been sought for the disposal; we have therefore become more dependant on foreign market in consequence of that unnatural stimulus which has been given to production, inasmuch as that unnatural stimulus has been accompanied with a reduction of wages (*g*).

A weaver remarks, the more we have produced the less wages we seem to get (*i*).

The distress of the weaver from low wages, and the competition of manufacturers arising from inadequate profits, led frequently to over-production; it has destroyed the capital of the manufacturer and ruined the operative weaver, it has brought him to beggary. That over-production has been caused in some measure by the want of means amongst the producers themselves to consume either what they produced, or some other article suitable for the supplying of their wants (*k*).

I attribute the distress of the weavers to over-production; this over-production has led to a great increase of foreign trade, and as the foreign trade has increased, the sufferings of the weaver have become greater and greater (*l*).

David Brook says, the extension of the foreign trade does not appear to have conferred any advantages upon the working people engaged in producing, their situation has got worse as the foreign trade has increased; they have had considerably harder to work with the increase of our foreign trade, for a less remuneration, for 15 years back. The foreign trade is not worthy of consideration, if it only leads to results like those, as it regards the working man (*m*).

(*d*) John Lennon, 21 July 1834. Q. 6359-6361.
(*e*) Wm. Longson, 22 July 1834. Q. 6840.
(*f*) Mr. J. C. Milner, 31 March 1835. Q. 548-551.
(*g*) R. M. Martin, esq., 11 July 1834. Q. 4024-4026. Q. 4099-4105.
(*i*) David Brook, 28 June 1834. Q. 625.
(*k*) Wm. Hale, esq. 12 July 1834. Q. 4177, 4178.
(*l*) Mr. T. Myerscough, 15 July 1834. Q. 4582-4584.
(*m*) David Brook, 28 June 1834. Q. 626 627.

SECTION III.—*Competition.*

THE two foregoing causes, viz., a reduction of wages and over-production, are ascribed to an unfair competition and rivalry among the master manufacturers, the mode and progress of which is thus exemplified: It is really painful to see with what avidity manufacturers hunt after a foreign connexion, whilst at the same time they prevent the consumption of goods at home, by disqualifying their workmen from becoming purchasers. We believe the majority of manufacturers are adverse to this; we believe they wish to see their workmen able to purchase the necessaries of life, instead of being obliged to beg them. But amongst so large a body of men, many bad ones will certainly be found. And will fair profits satisfy them? No. And what means of realizing an unfair profit are so simple, so easily attained, as a quiet, cunning reduction of the weaver's wages? What though his brother manufacturers are ruined by the step? His object is gained, and it is no matter. What though his weavers are starved and driven from the market? His object is gained, it is no matter. What though the cottage owner, to whom the weaver was formerly able to pay rent, must now be contented to want it; though his grocer, baker, butcher, &c., with whom he used to circulate his money, must either part with their goods "without money and without price," or keep them; though the builder, farmer, grazier, &c., with whom these have dealt, all suffer from the currency thus being withdrawn from circulation; though the revenue itself is injured, and the very nerves and sinews of the state are crippled? His object, his selfish, detestable object, is gained, and it is no matter. Now, ought this state of things to continue? Whilst the wholesome regulations of the quarantine exist, to prevent the visitations of a foreign plague, should this domestic pestilence be permitted to stalk abroad, and scatter desolation and death through the land? Surely no; yet what remedy presents itself? None. Whilst things remain as they are, the better disposed part of the manufacturers have no more control over this pest of trade and of his country than if he resided in the moon. He can ruin his brother manufacturers, starve the workman, spread distress throughout all the ramifications of society, until at last it smites the revenue itself, and all with impunity: but under the provisions of a Protection Wages Bill, this could never be the case. Without waiting to show the ruinous tendency of supplying a foreign market with goods, the labour on which has been in part only paid by the manufacturer, and the other part by the country, whether directly in the shape of poor-rates, or indirectly by casual acts of charity, makes no difference; without attempting to show, for it is already well known, that we thereby impoverish ourselves to enrich others, by giving, without receiving a due equivalent; we would beg to call your attention to the good that might be done at home. Here and in our colonies, where foreigners have no access, is a wide though neglected field for the application of capital. Here are millions who would be your customers, if they could, and who would not give a preference to foreigners, because they could not. Into this vacuum (and the absence of all comfortable clothing may well entitle us to call it so) you might discharge your surplus stock to-morrow, and receive a fair equivalent, if the rate of wages would permit the working man to become a purchaser. And what prevents the rate of wages from permitting him to become so? Why the unchecked power of reducing wages being possessed by individuals, who are ever ready to take advantage of it, in order to take the lead in the market for cheap goods. Thus a race (competition it is called) in the road to ruin has commenced, and though the workmen have arrived first at the goal, the manufacturers, nay the trade itself, will assuredly follow. For it is not foreign competition alone, gentlemen, that you have to contend with: no, nor with that of Scotland and Ireland, and all the different manufacturing towns of England; it is not with one nor all of these alone that you have to contend; you must strive amongst yourselves who shall be foremost in the race, and if one of you should outstrip your neighbour to-day, and achieve a sale on lower terms than he can sell at, may not he overtake you on the morrow, and perhaps pass you on the road. Thus, gentlemen, a mutual loss to yourselves is effected, and the comforts of your miserable workmen sacrificed, for the bare chance of gain, whilst the measure for which we solicit your support would secure a steady profit to you, and might eventually be the dawning of a bright and happy day to them. Before closing, permit us to assure you, gentlemen, that we are far from even wishing to infringe upon your profits. If we thought that the measure we recommend would injure you in any respect, we would be the last to propose it. We know well that trade cannot be carried on without capital in somebody's hands; and will not be long carried on unless that capital is productive. We are aware also that whether it is or is not possible for the manufacturer to prosper without the weaver thriving at the same time, it is quite impossible for the weaver to thrive unless the manufacturer is prosperous. It cannot be, then, that we would knowingly propose any measure that would have the effect of impeding his prosperity. And now, gentlemen, we leave the matter with yourselves, in the assured hope that you will not suffer it to fall to the ground. What we would advise, if we might presume to give our opinion, is, that the manufacturers in Manchester would meet in the Town-hall, or some other suitable place, on or before the 29th of January 1827, to discuss the subject, and resolve upon what steps it might be necessary to take before the Parliament assembles; and we would earnestly entreat the manufacturers of the neighbouring towns to adopt the same plan, and at the same time. Your voice, gentlemen, has often been raised at the call of distress; suffering humanity has often had reason to bless your liberality and exertions; and we trust that it shall never be said that you were then only callous when appealed to on behalf of your weavers (*n*).

The low prices of weaving have been caused by competition; thus occasionally, when times are very slack and work hard to be got, a weaver comes to a manufacturer and asks him for a piece; he says, "I have no piece to give you, if I give you a piece it will be for God's sake;" or "I will give you one, but if I do I would rather you would leave it behind you; but if you take it, it shall be at a shilling reduction in price." The starving man of course says to himself, it is better to have a potato than to have nothing, and so accordingly he brings home the piece and works it. Another manufacturer hears tell of this, and he says to his workmen, "I understand that such a manufacturer has got some of his work at a reduced price," and he says to his weavers, "If you do not take it from me at the same price you shall have no more work" (*o*).

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(*n*) From an appeal by the weavers to the manufacturers and merchants of Manchester in 1826. Delivered in by John Scott in his evidence of the 13 April 1835. Q. 3375.
(*o*) P. M'Gray, 11 April 1835. Q. 2860.

The operatives of Preston assign the great change which has taken place in their condition to domestic competition. What has given rise to the increase of domestic competition, they consider to be the small capitalist, who, in fact, comes into the market twice as often as the large manufacturer (*p*).

Mr. *John Marshall* stated, in March 1835, that he is quite sensible of the fact, that it was given in evidence before the Hand-loom Weavers' Committee last Session, that the weavers, who consist of nearly 1,000,000 human beings, are suffering the most severe privations, not from any want of employment, but for want of fair remunerating wages. And that the witnesses who came up, almost one and all, attributed it to a system of competition prevailing among the manufacturers, which has been carried on to such an extent that one individual among 100 manufacturers can bring the 99 down to any standard he establishes. He says, I think there may be one manufacturer, the extent of whose operations may counteract the effects produced by 99 others. There can be no doubt that one individual may counteract the good intentions of a large number. If a manufacturer employ 1,000 labourers, and 99 only 10 each, who may be willing to pay 5*s.* for labour, which the one-hundredth gets done for 3*s.*, the one would break down the 99. At present the controlling power of regulating wages rests in the hands of a very small minority (*q*).

There has been a gradual reduction of prices from 1792 to 1835, as exemplified in an article called a 20^{00} $\frac{8}{8}$ stout jaconet. In 1792 the price was 2*s.* 10*d.* per ell, 46 inches. In 1802, the same article had fallen to 2*s.* 8 $\frac{1}{2}$*d.* In 1810, it had fallen to 1*s.* 8 $\frac{1}{4}$*d.* In 1812, it had fallen to 1*s.* 6*d.* In 1818, it had fallen to 1*s.* $\frac{3}{8}$*d.* In 1820, it had fallen to 10 $\frac{3}{8}$*d.* In 1826, it had fallen to 6*d.* In 1835, it had fallen to 3 $\frac{7}{8}$*d.* There are different causes, and I would say a combination of causes, to account for this great fall in price, though I think it has been principally out of home competition; *i. e.* one manufacturer under-paying, and consequently under-selling his neighbour (*r*).

I can give no other cause for the distress than the immense competition that exists with the manufacturers themselves; and though there has been a great deal said about not being able to compete with the foreigners in their market, I think it is not so much the competition with the foreigners in their markets as the competition of the home manufacturers in the foreign markets; and that I believe is the principal cause that has reduced the weavers' wages (*s*).

The reason why wages have undergone such a prodigious reduction is, and I believe it is the opinion of the trade in general, that internal competition is the primary cause.

The lower-paying masters have been the principal cause of the reduction; and the high-paying master has been obliged to reduce to follow them. Suppose I am in the market; I have reduced the wages; I have been paying the reduced wages for a considerable time; there comes an overstocked market: I sell my goods. I can sell them at a less price than what you can sell yours, because I have paid a less price for wages than the manufacturer who has paid a higher price: to make a sale he must come down to the same price, and to come down to the same price, he must bring his weavers' wages down to that low price; and when they have got to that price, I, who had caused the said reduction, cause another reduction in the wages of my hands, upon which I derive a benefit hereafter until there comes another slackness in trade; then the master who has paid the highest wages is obliged to reduce wages again to the same point as the man that has undersold him before (*t*).

Home competition, which lowers the price of goods and lowers the price of weaving, is thus explained by Mr. *Makin*:—If I and my neighbour have both of us the same kind of goods to take to market, and we both of us go to the same individual to sell, and I am disposed to sell my goods for less money than my neighbour, then I supplant him in that market, and the operation of it would be, when he found it out, as a man of spirit he would go, and most probably, if he could afford, say, "But I will not be outdone in that way; you shall have them at so much less;" and so the thing has been going on shifting up and down, up and down, in that way, till things have got where they are: that is what I call home competition. The same remark applies to the goods when they are sent abroad as when they are sold at home, In this instance my neighbour has cut me out; I will cut him out, and I think I can nick it in another way, as we express it; I can subtract a little from the width or a little from the quantity; I can put a little coarser material in, or, as a last resort, I will screw down the poor weaver another sixpence, and that will do for me: that is the real and true state of the case. This home competition has not the effect of lowering wages in other trades as well as in hand-loom weaving; it has been checked by the combining power of the men themselves, and also from the extensive means of information upon the subject which exists among the handicrafts, and from the keeping up of a club among themselves. There is this peculiarity in the business, that of a shoemaker is carried on only by males, who can go out and associate together much more so than females, that they have a much more extensive correspondence; the same remark applies to the tailors, and still more to the carpenters and bricklayers, and only male labour in a great proportion is required; and also, what would contribute to keep their wages from falling would contribute to raise them if they choose to enter into a conspiracy upon that subject; they have not become so numerous a class as the weavers, and there has not been the same watchfulness to the consequences of reduction on the part of the weavers, inasmuch as at an early period of time the manufacturers and weavers were both getting excellent livings, and rather than put them to other trades or suffer the loss of their labour for a time, they consented to reductions which did not abridge the means of their subsistence, but only cut off their savings or their luxuries; they are dispersed over the country in cottages, perhaps they may be miles asunder from each other, without an accurate knowledge of what is going on, and the trade practised indiscriminately by men, women and children; they have been isolated and defenceless, and have been, as circumstances have presented themselves, a defenceless prey (*u*).

The depressed state of the silk weavers is thus accounted for by *J. Ballance*, esq.—In 1825 the difference between the price of weaving the same article in Manchester and Spitalfields I think was from 1 $\frac{1}{2}$*d.* a yard in 9*d.* I think in 1825 we paid 9*d.* per yard for what they paid 7 $\frac{1}{2}$*d.* For the

(*p*) Robert Crawford, 19 July 1834. Q. 5901, 5902.
(*q*) Mr. John Marshall, 24 March 1835. Q. 371–375.
(*r*) John Boyd, 3 April 1835. Q. 954–960.
(*s*) John Scott, 13 April 1835. Q. 3371.
(*t*) Thomas Worsley, 25 July 1834. Q. 7445–7447.
(*u*) Mr. John Makin, 17 July 1834. Q. 5185–5194.

the same article we now pay 5 *d.* per yard, and they pay, I think, about 4 ½ *d.* The reduction of the wages in Spitalfields upon those leading articles to which I refer was not a consequence of the reduction of the wages in Manchester, but the opening of the ports completely changed the character of the Spitalfields manufacture, turning it off from the better and superior articles. These were supplied not as formerly from Spitalfields, but from Lyons; and Spitalfields, deprived of her legitimate trade, was driven to take up the low priced Manchester trade in silk goods. Hence a race commenced between Manchester and Spitalfields in low price waive silks which continually glutted the market, and this it was that occasioned the reduction in the price of wages; Manchester reduced wages and Spitalfields followed, and then Manchester reduced again and Spitalfields followed, till it has reached the present miserable price. The effect of the difference between the price at Manchester and Spitalfields on low priced goods has not been, to give all the manufacture of low priced goods to Manchester and give the other to Spitalfields. Spitalfields being nearer the seat of fashion had always the first demand for the new fashions, and when these had come into the market they were copied by the Manchester houses, and manufactured upon a lowered and inferior description of silk goods, they come in for the second class of customers, and by the time that they were copied by the Manchester houses for this second class of customers, Spitalfields had produced something new, which in its turn was copied by Manchester. Now Lyons takes for the most part the position that Spitalfields took, and Manchester has much the same relation to Lyons that she had to Spitalfields; I speak of the manufacture as a whole. I do not attribute the increase of the silk manufacture at Manchester to the wages being lower in that neighbourhood than at Spitalfields. There was in the year 1823, 1824 and 1825, a disposition throughout the country to encourage the silk manufacture, and it spread in Manchester and many other places before the opening of the ports; and it is in the evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons that sat on the silk question in the year 1832, that the number of looms engaged in the manufacture of silks in Manchester at that time was not greater than the number of looms in the silk trade in Manchester in the year 1826. The trade has not extended at Manchester within the last few years, nor has it extended in Spitalfields; it has diminished in Spitalfields, especially as it regards the value of the article; and I think also in respect of the number of looms. They have been employed upon a coarse and low description of silk fabrics, where low wages are paid. The silk trade generally throughout the country has not extended since the year 1826. In the quantity of yards produced, it has changed its character in respect of the weight of a given yard. For instance, 100 looms that I employed from 1821 to 1826 would consume about 6,000 pounds weight of silk; 100 looms now employed on a similar description of goods would consume about 7,600 pounds weight of silk. The wages paid for the employment of the looms in the former period would be about 4,500 *l.* The wages paid for the employment of the looms at present would be little more than 3,000 *l.* So that here is one-fourth more consumption of silk in respect of weight, at the same time you have a reduction in the amount of wages of more than one-third, and the same number of hands employed at both periods. But there has not been an increase in the manufacture in the quantity in yards length. There is a greater quantity of raw silk worked up, but the silk is made of a coarser thread than formerly; we use a larger quantity of Indian and China silks than we did, which silk is relatively coarser than Italian silk; less labour is expended in the manufacture of such silks. France supplying the English market with fine and light fabrics has left the English manufacturer no option. The importation of foreign manufactured silks (I speak of Continental silks) interferes principally with the hand-loom weavers. I except the ribbon trade, of which I know nothing; I speak exclusively of broad silks, and I am not aware in the manufacture of broad silks that power-looms are used; I do not know of an instance. Some years ago an attempt was made to manufacture them by power, but it failed, and it has never been tried since. They are made altogether by hand-looms. As to the proportion of silk goods that are exported from this country, as compared with that which is consumed in this country, my only way of calculating that is from the returns of raw silk at the Custom-house, which we suppose is worked up and consumed; I should think that very nearly from 9,000,000 *l.* to 10,000,000 *l.* sterling is the value of the British silk manufactures of this country, of which I believe about 500,000 *l.* or 600,000 *l.* is exported. If the manufacturer of the silk in this country buy 10,000,000 *l.* and 500,000 *l.* is exported, it would follow necessarily that the export only amounted to one-twentieth part of the whole, and that I beg to add is an export exclusively of the low priced goods made of coarse India silks, upon which there is a debenture to assist the export of 3 *s.* 6 *d.* in the pound. That export is chiefly to our own colonies rather than to foreign countries, with the exception perhaps of English bandanas, manufactured at Macclesfield; they are exported to France. France does not manufacture that article; hence she takes it, and we have an advantage over her in respect of the printing of these handkerchiefs; that advantage, and being assisted by 3 *s.* 6 *d.* in the pound drawback upon these bandanas, enables us to export to France. The reduction, therefore, which has taken place in the wages of those persons employed in hand-loom weaving then affects the trade at home almost entirely; I should think there is a loss in wages to the operatives throughout the silk trade now, as compared with the year 1826, of the value of 1,500,000 *l.* annually.

The idea of this country ever becoming a large exporting country for the manufacture of silk articles is purely chimerical. It is utterly impossible, and I will give the Committee my reason for thinking so. France manufactures above 5,000,000 pounds weight of silk every year, three-fourths of which she grows on her own soil; of these 5,000,000 pounds weight which she manufactures, she exports at least three-fourths. Her markets are America, Greece, and the north of Europe, and now England. The advantage which her possession of the raw material gives her, which is the best description of silk in the world, her low rate of wages as compared with England, and her large exports, give her such a command and possession of the trade of the world in silks, that it is utterly hopeless for the English ever to expect to compete with France in the export of the same description of goods. Nothing, I apprehend, can be more evident than that if we require 30 per cent. to protect us against France in our own market, we never can expect to compete with France in another market, where no such duty can be obtained. It is therefore my opinion, that in order to keep the prices down so low as to afford us an opportunity of selling or of exporting 400,000 *l.* or 500,000 *l.* abroad, the whole of the home market is injuriously affected by a small reduction of price. And if the home market could be put on a satisfactory footing between the manufacturers of silk and the consumers, the loss of the foreign market would be perfectly immaterial to the trade; but I apprehend that the foreign market would not be lost; so far from being lost, it would be a little improved. The introduction of foreign silks has produced such a change in the English silk manufacture, that, taking it as a whole, it has turned it from the manufacture of rich high priced silk goods to a low priced article. The operatives that were employed upon the production of these rich goods are now employed

employed in the production of the low priced goods. Hence, both at Manchester and London, there has been an unusually large supply of low priced goods. This has forced down the prices of the article, and has forced down labour. The prices at which these articles have been sold have hence been more accessible to the lower orders of society. These low priced broad silks now so generally in use were very little known in this country or used eight or ten years ago; they were manufactured, but not in such large quantities. I do not think that silk goods are more generally used than they were a few years ago; it was a growing trade before any change of measures took place. I think the trade took a start in 1823, and that the silks became more generally used from that period than they were before. The manufacture of silk goods now may be tolerably fairly estimated of from 9,000,000*l.* or 10,000,000*l.* sterling. It has not doubled in value since 1823. The very reverse; I should give the value of the British silk manufacture at that time from 2,000,000*l.* to 3,000,000*l.* more than now. The value then (in 1823) would have been 12,000,000*l.* or 13,000,000*l.*, and that probably with a very diminished quantity. I have in recollection that we gave to my Lord Liverpool, in 1824, as a reason for his not placing the silk trade in jeopardy, that its returns were upwards of 12,000,000*l.* I am aware that the increase in the quantity of silk goods manufactured since 1826 has been attributed to the opening of the ports for the introduction of foreign manufactured silk; but I am satisfied that it is a fallacious opinion; I am quite satisfied of it. I deny that there has been any increase in the quantity of goods produced, at the same time there has been a very injurious change in the character of the silk manufacturer. I am aware also that the fabric and manufacture is stated to have improved owing to the introduction of foreign silks. So far from having improved it has deteriorated, and simply on this ground, the want of encouragement. I speak now of the rich fancy trade. Many years before the opening of the ports it was not unusual for a manufacturer of Spitalfields to employ what is called a designer, at a salary of 300*l.* a year, whose business was merely to produce patterns for the London market. This is not the case now; there were upwards of 4,000 looms in Spitalfields employed in the production of rich figured and fancy silk goods; two years ago there were not 300, and I apprehend they have not been on the increase since. I am asked to state the extent of the deterioration in the value of the labour of a hand-loom weaver working the same number of hours now from what it was in 1823; how much less he can earn now than in 1823, working the same number of hours?—In 1823 the price of a leading article called gros de Naples per yard was 11*d.*; that article is now manufactured in Spitalfields at 6*d.* per yard; I give 7*d.* because I know that the workmen cannot live upon 6*d.* I sell my goods to the same houses that purchase of manufacturers who pay only 6*d.*, and I surrender up profit to that extent. Take the price to be 11*d.* in 1823, and 7*d.* now, the Committee are to understand that the condition as respects the wages earned by the hand-loom weavers has deteriorated in the proportion of 7*d.* to 11*d.* The wages had been 11*d.* for a series of years, but on the opening of the ports in 1826 the wages were reduced. Mr. Huskisson said, we can give you only 30 per cent. duty, which was considered equal to 15*s.* per pound; it was replied that the difference in labour between England and France upon one pound of silk is 20*s.*, and he was asked, what we were to do with the remaining 5*s.*; he said, "You must get rid of it; it consists of a great many elements; perhaps your wages are too high." We did get rid of the 5*s.*, but it was by taking 2*d.* per yard off the wages of the operative, reducing them to 9*d.*, and they stood at 9*d.* till the year 1829. In 1829 the duty was reduced from 15*s.* to 11*s.*, at which it now stands. Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald was told that the reduction of the duty would occasion a further reduction in the wages, as the duty protected labour; he did not believe this, but the result was, that wages fell to 7*d.* and afterwards to 6*d.*, and they have never been above 7*d.* since. From 1826 to 1829 they fell from 11*d.* to 9*d.*, and from 1829 they have been sometimes 7*d.*, but generally 6*d.* The introduction of foreign commodities at a low rate of duty necessarily forces a low rate of wages, and unquestionably a high rate of protection duty secures a high rate of wages (*x*.)

Foreign competition has been assigned as a cause of the distress equally with home or domestic competition.

John Lennon says, a foreigner can make goods cheaper than we can; has provisions cheaper, less duty upon every article of consumption, and he pays less house-rent; in France, for instance, a weaver will get a four-room shop and a cow's grass for 3*l.* a year; and in Preston, for a common four-room shop, or at Manchester or Bolton, we pay 10*l.* or 12*l.* a year (*y*).

In 1831, the silk trade suffered much from the importation of foreign wrought silks. France, deprived of her usual channels of export to America and other places, poured into this country a large portion of her silk manufacture. One-third of the looms of Spitalfields in consequence were standing for more than nine months, and wages were deplorably low. What I now pay 7*d.* for, and some others 6*d.*, fell to 4*d.*, and in some instances as low as 3*d.*; the distress was very great, whether the men were in work or out of it they were alike wretched (*z*).

W. Longson says, in my opinion, the prosperity of the country that is so much boasted of has been taken from the labouring population by reckless competitions, and after the boast that has been made of underselling foreigners, that has been taken from the backs and bellies of the labouring population of this country. By those competitions the labouring classes have had taken from their backs and their bellies very large sums. You have scattered them upon the Continent to the foreigners. You have undersold each other in the foreign market and in the home, and nobody has got it but the foreigners. The population of this country have consumed the cotton goods at a lower price than they would otherwise have paid; which, much as it has been boasted of, has been of no use, and no real advantage to anybody. Whether there be any party in England who derives any advantage from that fall in price I am not positive; I should think there is an advantage, but a very temporary one. Were I manufacturing, and suppose I was to reduce the price of wages, I might have the benefit of that reduction for two or three weeks; but my underselling another trader obliges him to reduce wages and sell accordingly, so that it is but a temporary advantage to anybody, and the advantage is scattered away upon foreigners; besides, this underselling of them obliges them to lay heavy duties upon our goods. We have actually robbed the working population of their wages, and in reward for it, the foreigners have

(*x*) J. Ballance, esq., 16 June 1834. Q. 18-38. 39-61. (*y*) John Lennon, 21 July 1834. Q. 6241.
(*z*) J. Ballance, esq., 16 June 1834. Q. 119.

have protected themselves by duties, and we have not only to complain of home taxation, but foreign taxation too (*a*).

No capital can sustain a trade which does not go on with profit. The system of carrying on foreign trade without reference to profit, speculating on the misery of the weaver, is generally productive of great distress, and is reducing the population of this country to the minimum of subsistence, as has been too long the case in Ireland. I should be sorry to check foreign trade by any means if we could fairly run the race, but as we cannot, and we depend upon home, it would be better for us that the Continent of Europe were to be sunk beneath the ocean than that we should be destroyed by undue competition (*b*).

Section IV.—*Want of Combination.*

Connected somewhat with the foregoing causes is the alleged want of combination, which prevents the hand-loom weavers associating for their mutual defence.

P. Halliwell says, in reference to how it is that the great fall which has taken place in the wages of labour has affected the hand-loom weavers so much more than any other description of operatives, the hand-loom weaver is in an isolated state; they cannot by possibility combine. Now I apprehend that combinations have had a wonderful tendency to keep up the price of wages in other branches. Now it is certainly true that every man, except the weaver, that is employed in making any piece can earn his 20*s.* a week. I believe the average earnings of every adult labourer in making any piece, the moulder, the mechanic, the spinner, the dyer, the calico-printer, and, I may say, that every species of labour that is bestowed upon any piece, receives an equivalent for their labour at the rate of 20*s.* a week upon it, except the weaver; and he only gets 5*s.*, or only one-fourth of the pay which the other persons employed upon the same manufacture receive. The cause of that, I think, is, that the low capitalist hangs as a dead weight upon the respectable master, and brings him down in spite of all his efforts. Again, on being in an isolated state, and being unable to offer any barrier or check to this progress of reducing our wages. About 12 months ago an individual in our town attempted a reduction of wages, and at that time the speculations in cotton were taking place; on all such occasions as those they fall upon our wages. A certain individual attempted a reduction of the wages; we had a public meeting near the Britannia, and we animadverted upon the character and conduct of that individual; and we made a show of union upon the occasion, which had the desired effect of preventing a general reduction of wages in our town (*c*).

The reason why the wages of spinners have not fallen in the same ratio that the weavers' have, is, the spinners being assembled more under one roof are more capable of combining, and by combination they have opposed a barrier to reduction, inasmuch as the mill-owner having a capital invested he is interested in having his machinery moving, for it suffers from standing, and not being worked. So that in the other case the hand-loom weavers is the machine, and the manufacturer does not suffer in a like proportion (*d*).

Section V.—*Machinery.*

This is the chief cause assigned for the prevailing distress; and as every possible light that can be thrown on the bearing which the introduction of machinery has on the present condition of mankind may be desirable, no apology will be necessary for investigating this cause at some length.

Mr. *Burges* says, that unrestrained machinery is detrimental to the State, for since the introduction of machinery, I find, though persons have been employed, they have been employed for a greater length of time than they were antecedently to the introduction of machinery; they have received a less pay for such increased labour. Previous to the introduction of the power-loom the population was employed, men constantly if they would, and never idle by compulsion; subsequently to the introduction of the power-loom, population is employed, men seldom if they wish it, and often idle by compulsion; formerly women were employed only occasionally, now women are employed constantly; formerly children never, now children ever; formerly work generally light, now work always heavy; formerly wages were high in comparison with expenditure, now wages are low in comparison with expenditure; hence, formerly, operatives were willing, because able, to retire from business in middle life, now operatives are unwilling, because unable, to retire from business in middle life; hence too the poor-rates were formerly very light, hence too the poor-rates are now very heavy. Formerly taxes were trifling during peace, now taxes are heavy during peace; formerly war was dreaded for its increased expenditure, now war is desired for its increased expenditure; formerly the national debt absorbed the little capital that could not be employed in trade if wanted, now the national debt absorbs much capital that will not be employed in trade though wanted. Formerly lands, houses and rents gradually rose in value, and never sunk; now lands, houses and rents rapidly rise in value at one time, and at another rapidly sink. Formerly no speculations but on safe grounds—hence no bubbles—now all speculation only, on grounds unsafe—hence bubbles in abundance. Formerly profits slow, but certain, now profits rapid, but uncertain; formerly bad debts the exception in business, now good debts the exception in business; hence, formerly bankruptcies small in amount and few in number, now bankruptcies large in amount and many in number. Formerly banks never established without adequate capital, now banks seldom established with adequate capital; formerly confidence not rashly reposed nor idly withdrawn, now confidence quickly given and withdrawn as quickly; hence a panic formerly powerless to break a bank, now a panic certain to shake a bank. Formerly gold, silver and paper always circulating together, now gold, silver and paper never circulating together; formerly home trade chiefly looked to, now foreign trade chiefly looked to; formerly corn laws not railed at, now corn laws railed at. Formerly no show, all substance;

(*a*) Wm. Longson, 24 July 1834. Q. 7096-7101. (*b*) R. Montgomery Martin, esq., 11 July 1834. Q. 4018-4022.
(*c*) P. Halliwell, 19 July 1834. Q. 5737-5740. (*d*) Mr. J. Makin, 18 July 1834. Q. 5359, 5360

stance; now all show, no substance. Formerly trade increased from profits actually made, now trade increased from profits hoped to be made; formerly the age of gold, now the age of iron; formerly machine the slave of man, now machine the master of man (e).

The only fact to which reasoning and experience will be found to lead is, that the unrestrained use of machinery is strength in the beginning and weakness in the end. That the history of the cotton trade especially, where machinery has been employed to the greatest extent, proves that the use of machinery does in its first stage increase profits, which, leading to an influx of capital in the second, gives rise to competition in the third, which, producing diminished profit in the fourth, leads, in the fifth and last, to a destruction not only of all profit, but of nearly all the capital embarked in it. That these stages are passed with a rapidity which dazzles the eyes of fools, deceived by the show of fleeting prosperity; while its course is marked by the curses of the wise, who see in such rapid rise proofs of as rapid decay in a system, first demoralizing many, and then pauperising all concerned in it. That this deceitful and destructive system has already gone through three of its stages, is now in its fourth, and on the verge of the fatal fifth. That as all attempts to bolster up a system after it has passed its grand climateric is the very acme of folly, the true wisdom will be to introduce a compensating power into a system which must, if unchecked, produce mischief incalculable. That, to prove that the use of machinery has, in the cotton trade especially, passed its grand climacteric, it is only necessary to refer to the demands made by the manufacturers for the reduction of all imposts on the raw material and manufactured goods, none of which imposts would have been felt had the goods been sold to a profit; for, as the consumer would then have reimbursed the trade, not only for all such imposts, but even for the interest of the money advanced for their payment, the very imposts would have been a source of profit, and would consequently not have been complained of; but as they were complained of, only as machinery came more extensively into use, it is plain that the selling price, subsequent to the extended use of machinery, has not covered all the costs of production. That, in further confirmation of the trade being a losing one, it is only necessary to refer to the fact, that nearly all manufactured cotton goods can be purchased, even retail, for less than the cost of production; while previous to the general introduction of machinery, scarcely a single article could be so purchased. That this derangement of the healthy state of trade is, and must be, the inevitable result of the unrestrained use of machinery; which from its tendency to make the supply greater than the demand, destroys the very foundation of profit, which can rest only on the demand being greater than the supply. That, strange as the assertion may seem to be, that a losing trade can be carried on for a length of time, the fact is, that a trade is continually carried on with a loss of profit, from the difficulty of leaving it without incurring a loss of capital greater than the continued loss of profit. That as the difficulty is the greater as the capital sunk in the machinery is greater, a forced continuance in trade is the natural result. That such a forced continuance in trade produces a greater competition amongst the manufacturers. That such increase of competition produces a decrease in the price of the manufactured article. That such decrease in price is effected by the less cost of the raw material, or of the labour employed in its manufacture. That though a small rise in the price of the raw materials will produce a large rise in the price of the manufactured article, a very large fall in the former is necessary to produce a large fall in the latter; or, in other words, that as a fall in the price of the manufactured article is but slightly affected by a fall in the price of the raw material, every considerable decrease in the selling price is the result of the less cost of labour employed. That the less cost of labour employed is the result only of the substitution of the cheap power of machinery for the dear power of hands. That the consequence of such substitution of cheap machinery is the dismissal of the dearer hands. That such dismissal of hands produces an increase of marketable labour. That such increase of marketable labour produces a decrease in the value of labour, or in the wages of the operatives. That the wages of the operatives, after such decrease, are, or are not, sufficient to support them. That, if their wages be not sufficient, their maintenance becomes a burden to parties benefited but little, and often not at all, by the use of machinery; hence the increase of poor-rates in manufacturing towns. That if, on the other hand, their wages be sufficient, still, as they earn less, they can spend less than before. That as they spend less, they must consume less of articles of necessity, and, *à fortiori*, of articles not necessary. That this decrease in the consumption of articles of necessity causes a fall in the price of such articles grown on the land. That as the growers of such articles obtain less for their produce, they have less to give to their labourers. That the wages of these labourers, after such diminution, are, or are not, sufficient for their support. That if the wages be not sufficient, the support of the agricultural labourer is thrown on parties benefited little, and often not at all, by the use of machinery; hence the increase of poor-rates in agricultural districts. That if, on the other hand, the wages be sufficient, as the labourers receive less, they can spend less on articles not necessary, for of articles of necessity grown by themselves their purchase is not considerable. That as thus, by the use of machinery, the mechanical operatives spend less on articles of necessity, and the agricultural labourer less on articles not necessary, trade in general, which is composed of these two grand divisions, must suffer in both ways, exactly in the ratio that the consumption of articles of necessity bear to those not necessary. That as the retail dealers of each kind thus suffer from the decrease in the wages of the two grand divisions of consumers, the wholesale dealers must suffer also. That if the wholesale dealers thus suffer, the merchants connected with such wholesale dealers must suffer also. That if the farmers, retail dealers, wholesale dealers, and merchants, thus suffer, the bankers, with whom they are connected, must suffer also. That if there be a public debt in a country where machinery is extensively used, the capital not employed in trade will be invested in the purchase of the stock of such debt. That such purchases will increase as the profits to be derived from trade decrease. That as the demand for stock increases, the supply will decrease, and consequently the funds rise. That as the funds rise, the Sinking Fund will effect less and less for the redemption of the debt. That as the debt decreases slower, the sum necessary to pay the interest will be both larger in amount, and continue to be demanded longer. That as the taxes imposed for the payment of the interest are both larger in amount, and continue to be demanded longer, the people will become impatient of such taxation. That as the patience of the people has its limits, if such taxes, whose burden is felt to be intolerable, be not repealed, the nation will oppose, first by peaceable, and then by violent means, the government. That such opposition will end, eventually, in the overthrow of every government that permits itself to be carried away by the very plausible, but

(e) G. Burges, esq., M. A., 23 July 1834. Q. 6891.

but really absurd theory, that cheapness alone is the measure of utility. That the overthrow of the government will bring with it the destruction of that machinery, the very cause of all the mischief; 1, to the operatives; 2, to the agriculturists; 3, to the retail dealers; 4, to the wholesale dealers; 5, to the merchants; 6, to the bankers; 7, to the fundholders; 8, and lastly, to the Government itself (*f*).

The introduction of the power-loom has been more prejudicial to the hand-loom weavers than to any other class; it has benefited the nation indirectly; it has injured the population directly. To one part of the nation it has been beneficial, but detrimental to another portion of it; beneficial to those who either possess money, or money's worth in the shape of credit, it has been; but to an individual who has no capital, as Paley says, except in his hands, machinery has, like a destroying angel, come and cut off his hands, and permitted the individual to starve by inches. It has been prejudicial to a part of the nation, inasmuch as it has crippled the means of the working population, whom it has compelled to work a greater length of time, and to receive less, and all classes to remain longer in business, instead of retiring as they did of old; while those who happened to amass capital during the suspension of cash payments, and those who are still living subsequent to the return to cash payments, have alone been benefited by the introduction of machinery, which has enabled them to buy nearly double the quantity they could formerly, and at a decreased price. Where the value of labour is dear, as in America, it would be very well to introduce a cheaper substitute; or where a nation has, during the suspension of cash payments, an unlimited paper currency, the tendency of which is to increase the value of human labour, the introduction of machinery acts as a proper counterpoise to that increase of price (*g*).

Mr. *Marshall* says, I assign the cause of the increased privation which now prevails among the hand-loom weavers mainly to the uncontrolled and extended application of mechanical power; that is the first great cause of the depression. The census of 1831 proves that the extended application of machinery has annihilated all the domestic industry or domestic manufacture which used to prevail among at least from 800,000 to 1,000,000 of families, and which were carried on, not to a large extent, but to such an extent as supplied all the domestic comforts of the family. Domestic manufacture used to pervade every labourer's cottage, every farm-house, and the habitations of the handicraftsmen. The labourers' families were more generally employed in carding and spinning of wool, given out by the shopkeepers of the villages; and the yarn, after being taken back by them in exchange for the articles of the shop, passed into other hands to be wove; the farm-houses and the houses of the handicraftsmen, such as the smiths, carpenters, wheelwrights and persons of that description, were more generally employed in the spinning of flax, the yarn of which they afterwards sent to be wove, some for sale and some for domestic use. It will be found, on pursuing this inquiry, that going back 40 years, the three counties of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk were to England what the great district of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire is at this time; it was the great manufacturing district of the kingdom, which then supplied the metropolis with worsted and linen manufactures to a very large extent. The city of Norwich, as is the case at the present day upon a more extended scale, supplied the finer description of fabrics, and Hampshire particularly, within the recollection of persons still carrying on business in London, used to supply entirely certain species of fabrics, such as striped linens and productions of that kind. The west of England, it is too well known to be necessary for me to state, was another manufacturing district for exchange, and Exeter particularly was a large exporting town of town manufactures. The carding, spinning and winding was carried on in the private houses; and weaving was, to some trifling extent, a factory operation. Four, six, eight and ten looms were sometimes found collected together; occasionally a single loom was to be found, but it was no uncommon thing to find six, eight or ten looms concentrated. Those parties who had the looms subordinate to the people who spun or prepared the yarn were connected with them in some cases, and in others not: to the farmers more particularly they were weavers for hire. The yarn used to be sent from the farm-houses and houses of the handicraftsmen, and persons above the common class of labourers. The yarn was sent to the weavers and returned in cloth, and paid for at so much per yard or piece. That was more especially the case with linen yarn; the woollen yarn passed generally into the hands of the village shopkeepers, and from them through dealers into the West Riding of Yorkshire, and the west of England, while the linen was generally wove and bleached in the villages where spun. The flax-grower prepared the flax for sale to the shopkeepers of the towns and villages, of whom it was bought by the matrons of the farmers and handicraftsmen, and the wool went through the hands of dealers and sorters before it came into the hands of the shopkeepers to be given out for spinning; the linen was manufactured much for domestic use and local consumption, but both linen and worsted fabrics were articles of exchange to a very great extent; but being more in small quantities, the operations were not so perceptible as the exchange of manufactures are at the present time, when the whole operation is concentrated in one great district, and when it all passes through the hands of dealers. Whether there were cloth halls, and places of that kind, to which these goods were carried by the farmers, I cannot speak to distinctly, but I think my recollection serves me sufficiently to enable me to state, that in the inquiry on the state of the woollen trade, before a Committee of the Lords, four or five sessions since, in 1829 or 1830, this question was put, and to the best of my recollection the answer went to show that there never had been any halls or places of public resort in the west of England similar to those which I believe do still or did prevail till recently in Leeds and the north of England. The manufacture also consisted rather of stuffs than of cloths; woollen or worsted stuffs, under the denomination of serges, tammies, camlets, &c., which are now superseded by the lighter fabric of cotton. I think that the great alteration which has taken place, has been the means of placing the artizan more completely in a state of dependence upon the manufacturer. My own knowledge of the fact embraces an extensive district in the midland counties, in which I can look back upon the habitations of 50 families, whom I knew as agricultural labourers 35 or 40 years ago, living in great comfort, the mother and children of the family exchanging the produce of their labour at the wheel to the extent of 2*s*., 3*s*., 4*s*., or 5*s*. a week, all of which operation is now annihilated; and owing to its absence it is that so much privation prevails among the farm labourers in certain districts; and it will be seen, on a close investigation, that there is a greater pressure of poor-rates

(*f*) G. Burges, esq., M. A., 24 July 1834.

(*g*) G. Burges, esq., M. A., 23 July 1834. Q. 6899–6904.

poor-rates in all those districts where manufacturing operations were more extensively carried on, as in certain parts of Wiltshire and Hampshire, and more particularly the counties of Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, are found to present a far greater parochial assessment than any other district in the kingdom, notwithstanding their superior advantages in an agricultural point of view, in having the benefit of the London market. I therefore ascribe to the application of steam to manufacturing purposes, and the greater quantity of fuel to be found in the north of England, the transfer of that description of industry, and hence the first great cause of the relatively worse condition of the hand-loom weavers than any class of labourers, save and except the agricultural labourers in those districts where the extinction of this domestic industry has placed them in a worse position than the agricultural labourers in districts not so much affected by it.

The distress of the hand-loom weavers has mainly resulted from the uncontrolled and extended application of mechanical power. The first effect was, to gradually annihilate all domestic manufacture in the rural districts, which led to a great migration of the population from those districts to the metropolis, and the manufacturing district of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. Since the commencement of the present century, this migration has thrown into the metropolis an increase of population exceeding 600,000 beyond the excess of births over deaths, and upwards of 550,000 into the manufacturing district of the North; and as the migration took place at ages approaching maturity, it has further led to a relatively greater increase of births in the manufacturing districts than in other parts of the kingdom. Hence a solution to the otherwise seeming extraordinary increase in the population both of the metropolis and of the manufacturing district of Lancashire and the West Riding, which has more than doubled since the commencement of the present century; and since the commencement of the preceding century the population of Lancashire has increased eight-fold, and that of the West Riding four-fold. Thus, notwithstanding the abundant employment which the first application of steam-power and mechanical improvements in spinning of cotton gave to weavers in the Lancashire district, the large extraneous supply of labour which the rural districts threw into Lancashire, soon became equal to, and even to exceed the demand, except at greatly reduced rates. And since the application of steam-power to weaving in 1814, the ascendancy of the employer over the employed has become such, as to cause the same labour, in a certain kind of weaving, to be performed for 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.*, when on an average of the five years, 1798 to 1802, 15*s.* was paid, and previous to 1798, a much higher price. In other branches of weaving, 135*l.* is now only distributed for the same labour among the same number of persons as in 1814 received 300*l.*; such has been the effect of the extended application of machinery more immediately in relation to the hand-loom weavers in the district of concentrated manufacture, while, by its annihilation of all the domestic operations of carding, spinning, weaving, &c. in the rural districts, it has led to an increase of parochial taxation of from 2,000,000*l.* to upwards of 8,000,000*l.* in amount per annum; and notwithstanding the extraordinary and unparalleled increase of the cotton manufacture since 1792, from 30,000,000 to 300,000,000 lbs. per annum, and the imposing effect which it produces in its concentrated district of action, there are fewer persons, in the aggregate of Great Britain, now deriving subsistence from manufacturing labour than there were 40 years ago: the application of steam power, in conjunction with various mechanical contrivances, to manufacturing purposes, having led to the great changes in the relations of the British community just previously described; and, by the influx of labourers from the rural into the manufacturing districts, to the serious depression in the remuneration for weaving.

Machinery has had a material effect on our foreign trade. We gave more of our manufactures in return for a given quantity of the cotton of America and tallow of Russia in 1834 than we did in former years. It is a less and less advantageous trade, yet not absolutely a losing one; so long as anything is added to the value of the raw material, something is gained to the nation, while the labourer or artizan who gives the increased value may be very inadequately rewarded. The diminished value of the products of British labour exported is partly at the expense of diminished profits, but more especially at the expense of the labourer, in a greatly reduced rate of wages. Thus, the extension of this foreign trade has been exceedingly prejudicial to the labourer, in so far as it has tended to a diminution in the rate of his wages and his means of subsistence, and it is not only prejudicial to him, but it prejudices all the productive and active interests of the country. It has been the competition consequent on the facility of production by steam-power and improved machinery that first led to the depression of price; the privation of the hand-loom weaver was an inevitable consequence of the competition which the uncontrolled and extended application of scientific and mechanical power engendered. It is known that for the last two or three years we have given 30 pieces of a given description of calico for 300 pounds of American cotton; and the average of the 24 years preceding that was not more than 24 pieces. One reason, and a sufficient one too, why 30 pieces are now given for the same weight of cotton, for which 24 pieces only were given formerly, is the high price of cotton, which the spirit of competition in England has occasioned, from 5*d.* to 9*d.* per lb.; if, therefore, the British Government had put on a duty of 4*d.* per lb. instead of suffering competition to give the boon to the American planter, and thereby enable the banking interest of America to draw 20,000,000 dollars in bullion, at the expense of British labour, in a single year, and that while the produce of our own soil had been exposed to a depression in the proportion of 66 to 40, that, viz. a duty of 4*d.* per lb., would have led to the obtaining again 300 lbs. for 24 pieces of cloth as formerly. Within a given time this country has been impoverished to the amount of 150,000,000*l.* or 200,000,000*l.* by foreign trade. If less than that amount had been exported, the hand-loom weavers and the country at large might have been in an equally disadvantageous position, from the absence of employment; but the country might have been in so much better a condition had the foreign trade been controlled by proper and commensurate regulations.

As far as the products of the hand-loom enter into foreign consumption, it is not a competition with labour by which they are counteracted, but a competition with inordinate rates of duty; therefore any specific measure for enhancing the rate of wages carries in itself a tendency to its own defeat, as far as the external operation is concerned. I mean to say that the power-loom coming into competition with the hand-loom throws a good many hands out of employ, and therefore has the effect of diminishing the rate of wages; and the supply of labour, where such an extent of mechanical power is in operation, has a tendency to increase production beyond the means of consumption, so that the application of the power-loom in one great fabric extends its operation, in a circuitous manner,

manner, to all others. In this country it has actually depressed labour to the extent of annihilating domestic industry in 1,000,000 families at the least. In reference to the question, whether machinery has taken up labour at an earlier age than it otherwise would have done, and so given employment to a greater mass of population than could have been called into operation under any other system, I am happy that it has been put to me, in so far as it involves one of the most important considerations to which the attention of Englishmen can at this time possibly be directed, and affords me an opportunity of exposing one of the most fatal mistakes in which the country has for 20 years indulged, that of the supposed preponderance of the manufacturing over the agricultural population. Owing to the inefficient manner in which the censuses of 1811 and 1821 were prepared, the country was led to suppose that we had 1,500,000 manufacturers and traders to 900,000 agriculturists. It turns out, however, by the census of 1831, that whilst there are 1,243,000 male persons, 20 years of age and upwards, dependent exclusively on agriculture, there are less than half a million actually employed in what strictly comes under the denomination of manufacture. Hence, whilst 30 or 35 years ago from 800,000 to 1,000,000 families were deriving, though not their entire subsistence, such portion of their means from manufacturing labour as supplied them with all those articles of subsistence which constitute the comforts of life, they are now deprived of them, owing to the introduction of machinery and the concentration of the manufacturing operations. There are less than half the number now deriving part of their subsistence, and such part as would constitute all the comforts of the family, from manufacturing labour than there were 40 years ago. There was then a large class of agricultural labourers partly employed in manufactures, and it was from the manufacturing operation that what may be considered the comforts of the family were derived. The operation was, to change the yarn which was given out in wool by the shopkeepers weekly, and afterwards carried back to the shop to be exchanged for such articles as the shop supplied. It is the deprivation of these comforts that has effected such a fearful change, not only in the pecuniary but in the social and moral condition of the peasantry of the country (*h*).

Mr. *Oastler* says, The immense supply of mechanical labour has really given such a power to capital over the labour of the working classes that it is almost possible for them to bring down the wages of labour to any point at which bare existence can be maintained, whatever the consequences of such a state of things might be to society generally; decidedly to that point at which Englishmen will revolt, because they will not lie down quietly and starve by thousands; but I believe that capital has the power, in consequence of the very great quantity of labour in the market. One cause is, the Irish emigrants, who drive the peasantry of this country and the operatives of this country to take starvation wages, and which must soon lead the workmen to resist all sorts of rule and law; and I have not the least doubt that if something is not done, and done immediately, that that will be the result of it. I have not the least doubt that capital, as it is now applied to labour and to property, is acting as a lever, and will, if not restrained, destroy the whole constitution of England. I believe that it is fighting a war now as much against the palace of the King, and the palaces of the nobles, and the mansions of the manufacturers, as it is against the cottages of the poor; and I believe that the public will not, because they cannot, bear it much longer. That is my decided opinion, from observations that I have made (*i*).

Taking manual labour and machinery combined, we are throwing away the industry of this country, by which foreigners reap a decided advantage, and we sustain great injury. England has given, since the termination of the war in 1815, 150 millions,—I take that as the minimum, though I think I might with propriety say 200 millions,—value of the products of labour, which resolves itself into as complete an abstraction as if it had been levied as a contribution at the point of the bayonet (*k*).

John Boyd says, There is another cause to which I attribute the fall in the weavers' wages to a certain extent, it is machinery. Wherever it comes in to assist manual labour, it ought to be encouraged; but when it comes to supersede manual labour, it ought to be restricted, for these reasons: it has a direct tendency, in its mode of operation, ultimately to demoralize society, by monopolizing into the pocket of the few, that which was divided as the price of labour amongst the many, and thus tending to keep in a wholesome state the strings that move society. It can be little consolation to the working man that the machine that has deprived him and his family of bread offers him a particular necessary at a cheaper rate than ever he had it offered to him before, for without his usual wages he can purchase it at no price; neither is it any consolation that the public is advantaged just now, or that he or his class be advantaged hereafter; he cannot but see that the immediate advantage of the public is his immediate loss, and as a workman has seldom more than his week's wages to look to, he is thus brought face to face with starvation. It acted on the cotton trade as an influx of hands to the same amount of its production, and by tending to cheapen the article, it attracted new consumers. The evil occasioned by power-loom is not altogether confined to England and Scotland, it is felt by the trade in Ireland, for it can be sold cheaper in Manchester than in Belfast (*l*).

Richard Needham says, The decline of wages has stimulated the increase of machinery.

I am afraid the people will be goaded and driven to that point that they will just rush upon what they consider to be the cause; they have it before their eyes; there are not two opinions upon it; they believe that it is the steam power; they believe that that is the grand agent that is destroying us; they believe it is that which is causing all the revolutions on the Continent and in England, and all the reforms; that it is not the schoolmaster, but that which is the agent. It will destroy itself; it will destroy the most virtuous government that ever was; it is destroying all the governments of the world (*m*).

(*h*) Mr. John Marshall, 24 March 1835. Q. 194-206. 214. 272-280. 382-388. (*i*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3816.
(*k*) Mr. John Marshall, 24 March 1835. Q. 276. (*l*) John Boyd, 3 April 1835. Q. 978.
(*m*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5611. 5588, 5589.

SECTION VI.—*The Power-Loom.*

THIS Section might have been incorporated with the preceding Section, but that the statements therein made bear on the operation of machinery in general, while the following testimony is chiefly confined to the power-loom, respecting which a good deal of evidence has been adduced to show that the power-loom is not a cause of the existing distress among the hand-loom weavers. Whether hidden feelings may not have influenced some of that testimony may be judged of from the following observation of *P. Halliwell*, a weaver, in answer to the question,

You ascribe, to a certain degree also, the depression in the rate of wages, owing to the power-loom being introduced to a greater extent in the weaving trade than formerly?—I said, that I could not say how far that had the effect; I believe it has some effect, but it has not the effect that some men imagine. I wish to state one circumstance which has a tendency to make us remarkably delicate upon this subject: it is our firm opinion, that if we were to come to Parliament with a declaration that we believed the power-loom to be the cause, we could not have any relief from this Committee; and, in fact, the declaration of Lord Althorp, upon the subject of agricultural and manufacturing distress, has strengthened that opinion. He declared, that with respect to the agricultural distress, something must be done; but as regarded the hand-loom weavers, the case was hopeless. Now I cannot contemplate this state of things with any degree of patience, because I am in a certain situation; I am now at this moment within a twelvemonth of 60 years of age, and I calculate that within the space of eight years I shall myself become a pauper. I am not capable, by my most strenuous exertions, to gain ground to the amount of a shilling; and when I am in health it requires all my exertions to keep soul and body together; and I look upon it that it will ultimately be my situation to come under the operation of the Poor Law Amendment Bill very shortly. These are my feelings, and I beg the Committee will excuse me for expressing them. Now in situations of this kind, no wonder if men sometimes go astray. I do not wish myself to be relieved at the expense of any body of artisans. I do not wish the Government to legislate to the prejudice of any particular branch of the trade, except they see that it would be a general good (*n*).

It is in evidence that distress exists in full force where the power-loom has never been employed. Mr. *Fielden* observes, The power-loom has never been used yet in making the cloth upon which Mr. Needham gave evidence, that is six-fourths cambric. It has been tried, but the witnesses from Bolton stated that no advantage would accrue from the adoption of the power-loom to make that description of cloth; for to use it would require one person to attend one loom, and having a person to attend one loom would subject the party using them to the same rate of wages that he pays for out-door work, besides the expenses of the machinery and buildings. My opinion is decidedly that the power-loom will never be able to produce the greatest part of the weaving now carried on in the borough of Bolton, in a way that will give encouragement to the employment of capital for that purpose. Those persons engaged in the weaving of that cloth with which the power-loom does not come into competition are now worse off than those engaged in weaving cloth with which it does come into competition. We manufacture between two and three thousand pieces a week of hand-loom cloth, and what we manufacture is a cloth with which the power-loom does compete, and we pay better wages than the Bolton manufacturers pay to their weavers of fancy goods and muslins, with which no similar goods made by power-looms comes into competition. I cannot see, therefore, that the power-loom is in any way the cause of their destitution. The same remark applies to the manufacture of silk and linen, in both which branches the power-loom has not been to any extent yet introduced, and, from the evidence given before the Committee, you will find that those employed in the manufacture of linen and silk are in almost as destitute a condition as the muslin weavers of Scotland and Bolton (*o*).

Robert Crawford says, There are a great many power-looms in operation at Preston, and they keep increasing; but I do not think that the distress of the hand-loom weavers is attributed to the power-loom by the hand-loom weavers of Preston so much as might be expected. They consider that the power-loom neither is nor ever will be able to manufacture what they do; and, when one expense is put to another, they consider it will cost the manufacturer as much to make the manufacture in the power-loom as in the hand-loom (*p*).

Mr. *Makin* says, I doubt whether the power-loom has tended to bring down wages at all; it is possible that it may have had a small influence, but nothing to the extent to which wages have been reduced.

The power-loom has not had the effect of producing, to a very great extent, the evils complained of by the petitioners, but some other cause is at work, of an evil tendency to hand-loom weavers. I conceive that if the power-loom had not been in existence at all, the same result which has now ensued would have happened, or nearly so (*q*).

Mr. *Ashworth* says, I am not of opinion that the great cause of the depression of the hand-loom weaver is the existence of this power-loom, which interferes with him in every step he takes. I believe it is not in woollen. I believe that before we had any power-looms in our district, that the price of weaving was about the same as it is now; and I do not know at all that the power-loom has reduced the wages of the hand-loom weaving in the woollen branch; I am not aware that it has. It has come into competition with hand labour a good deal; but I cannot speak so well to things I have not had experience of. A very respectable gentleman, who manufactures by power, told me that he believed he could manufacture them as low by hand; but he says, "I have got my bark out to sea, and now I must either sail or sink." He had engaged in the power-loom. I know of my own knowledge that the wages were reduced as low as they are now before the power-loom was introduced to make this bocking, and I am pretty sure within 2 *s.* of the present prices (*r*).

Mr.

(*n*) P. Halliwell, 19 July 1834. Q. 5779.
(*o*) John Fielden, esq., M.P., 12 March 1835. Q. 17–19.
(*p*) Robert Crawford, 19 July 1834. Q. 5910 5911.
(*q*) Mr. Makin, 16 July 1834. Q. 4894. 4900.
(*r*) Mr. Ashworth, 26 July 1834. Q. 7743–7746.

Mr. *Ballance* observes, We do not attribute the falling of the price of the silk manufacture and the fall in the rate of wages paid to the workmen to the introduction of power-looms. We have no power-looms (*s*).

Philip Halliwell thinks that the power-loom is to the hand-loom what the larger wheels in a factory are to the smaller wheels, and what the smaller wheels and the larger wheels together are to the self-acting mule. The power-loom and the hand-loom have their respective departments, and one does not interfere with the other so much as some people imagine (*t*).

There is no weaving by machinery in the linen trade, that I am acquainted with; in the woollen, there are a few power-looms (*u*).

Mr. *Myerscough's* testimony is rather at variance with the foregoing; he says, with reference to the effect of the power-loom, So far as the quilts and counterpanes go, it produces no other effect than this, that it throws a great competition among the persons entirely thrown out of employ, whose employment is at less wages than others; but generally there is no doubt the power-loom produces a very considerable effect, inasmuch as by the power-loom a great many of the fabrics of manufacture done amongst us, which used to be done by hand-loom weavers, are now done by power. The persons displaced by that are thrown upon the other branches of weaving, to a certain degree; and that lowers the condition of persons engaged in weaving (*x*).

Mr. *Oastler* sums up the argument by observing, I do not think that machinery is the cause of our distress, but the manner in which machinery is applied to the manufacture. I think that machinery is a great blessing, but avarice has made it a great curse (*y*).

Section VII.—*Taxation.*

The mode of relief suggested under this head is the removal of taxes which press on the labourer, and their transfer to dormant accumulated capital.

Robert Montgomery Martin, esq., says, I was a medical officer in His Majesty's navy for a few years, and have spent 10 years in travelling in different quarters of the globe to investigate the state of different countries. I am the author of a work on the "Taxation of the British Empire," and several other works, particularly the "History of the British Colonies," in which I have endeavoured to develope the vast resources of this country, and the best means of providing employment for the large population which now exists in it. I have directed my attention to the present social state of this country, and more particularly to the condition of the working classes, and the taxation which they pay in proportion to their wages. In investigating the subject of taxation, I was necessarily obliged to look into the condition of the people, and the effect of financial operations upon their condition; I have prepared an analysis of a few of the articles bearing more particularly on the labouring classes, which I beg to deliver in:—"Malt liquor I take to be one of the first; if a labouring man consume one pot of beer (porter) daily, the taxation, direct and indirect, on him is,—1st, On the land whereon the barley is grown; 2d, On the taxed labour which grows it; 3d, On the malt; 4th, On the maltster's charge for vexatious Excise regulations; 5th, On the hops; 6th, On the licence for a publican. On all these items, 3 *d.* out of the 4 *d.* is tax; therefore, on 365 pots of stout, the working man pays an annual tax of 4 *l.* 11 *s.* 3 *d.* I come to the second article which enters into the consumption of the working man, Sugar; if a labouring man consume one pound of sugar weekly (which is allowed in some workhouses, and to the lowest household servant), the taxation, direct and indirect, thereon is, direct on the sugar 2 ½ *d.*, indirect by West India monopoly, 1 ½ *d.*, total 4 *d.*; therefore on 52 pounds of sugar the poor man pays an annual tax of 17 *s.* 4 *d.* I come to Tea or Coffee, which enters into the consumption of the working classes; if a labouring man consume four ounces of tea per week (or its equivalent in coffee) valued at 4 *s.* per pound, the direct taxation thereon is full 100 per cent., therefore 12 pounds of tea per annum consumed imposes on him a direct tax (on a wholesome stimulant) of 1 *l.* 4 *s.* annually. If coffee be used instead of tea, it will not make any perceptible difference in the amount of the taxation, because the indirect mulct by reason of the West India monopoly of the coffee market fully compensates for the difference of tax levied; this is independent of the licence for permission to sell tea or coffee. Soap; if a labouring man use one pound of soap weekly to wash himself and his clothes (I beg to observe I have been under the estimate in every instance), he pays a direct tax thereon of 2 *d.* per pound, and an indirect one of 1 *d.*, more owing to harassing Excise laws and Custom duties on tallow, oil, barilla, &c. as well as on the taxed labour in preparing it; thus 3 *d.* per week for one year is 13 *s.* per annum. On Housing; a labouring man it is to be supposed requires housing; for the poorest tenement, or part of a tenement, he is taxed in a variety of ways, and the income of the ground and land or house lord must be made up from his portion of rent; thus, if he pay 1 *s.* per week, or 2 *l.* 12 *s.* per year, he pays a proportion of the land-tax, of the tax on window-glass, on timber, on bricks and on various building articles, as also on the outlay of taxed labour in preparing the house, to say nothing of the window tax, or of the local rate or parish assessment, which every house must pay; it is therefore a very low estimate to say that the annual tax for all these is not less than 12 *s.* per annum. My next item is on Corn and Food; the indirect effect of the corn laws in raising the price of bread and food, it is difficult to make evident by figures, but to a person who studies the subject of finance, a conclusion may be readily arrived at in his own mind; there can be no doubt that the protection which the landed interests possess enhances the prime cost of the necessaries of life by at least 20 per cent., if not more. I speak upon them collectively. While the general taxation on the labour requisite to grow and till the food still further augments the burden on the working classes; we will estimate the cost of bread and meat to a labouring man or artisan at 10 *d.* per diem, or 15 *l.* 4 *s.* 2 *d.* per annum, the minimum of supply to a hard-working man, who is thus indirectly mulcted, at the very least, 3 *l.* per annum. On Clothing; the poorest clad man will require in shoes, stockings, shirts, smock-frock, trousers, hat and handkerchief,

(*s*) Mr. Ballance, 16 June 1834. Q. 128. (*t*) Philip Halliwell, 19 July 1834. Q. 5727.
(*u*) David Brook, 28 June 1834. Q. 465, 466. (*x*) Mr. Thos. Myerscough, 15 July 1834. Q. 4371-4373.
(*y*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3817.

chief, at least 60 *s.* worth in the year, one year with another, the taxed labour entering into the preparation and sale of these, or the duties levied on the importation of the raw materials, add a sixth to the cost ere they reach the consumer, who thus pays a tax of 10 *s.* per annum. The recapitulation is: No. 1. Tax on malt, 4 *l.* 11 *s.* 3 *d.* No. 2. On sugar, 17 *s.* 4 *d.* No. 3. Tea or coffee, 1 *l.* 4 *s.* No. 4. On soap, 13 *s.* No. 5. Housing, 12 *s.* No. 6. On food, 3 *l.* No. 7. On clothing, 10 *s.* Total taxes on the labourer per annum, 11 *l.* 7 *s.* 7 *d.* Taking a labourer's earnings at 1 *s.* 6 *d.* per diem, and computing his working 300 days in the year (which very many do), his income will be 22 *l.* 10 *s.*; thus it will be admitted, that at the very least, half of his income is abstracted from him by taxation; indeed this is rather a low estimate, for do what he will, eating, drinking or sleeping, he is in some way or other taxed. I therefore concur in the opinion which has been ascribed to the Lord Chancellor of England, that the poor man is taxed from his cradle to his grave. The taxation of England, Ireland and Scotland for the past year, with the proportion paid by the rich, the middle and the working classes, I have divided as follows: I take the rich at two millions, the middle classes at eight millions, and the working classes at 14 millions, and I demonstrate that of the Excise the rich pay in round numbers, 2,990,000 *l.*, the middle classes, 7,000,000 *l.*, the working classes, 8,000,000 *l.*, and of the Custom duties, which embrace a large portion of the articles which enter into the consumption of the bulk of the community, the rich pay 4,000,000 *l.*, the middling classes, 6,150,000 *l.*, the working classes, 7,500,000 *l.* The table drawn up from the Finance Accounts. This 100 per cent. of additional wages which is required by a British labourer, renders him in many cases too expensive a machine either for the purpose of tillage or for the production of manufactures, when brought into competition with untaxed machinery, or when brought into competition with foreign countries, the people of which bear such a small proportion of taxation compared to this. I give in the proportion of taxation paid by the different nations of Europe, to show how impracticable it is for the people of this country to compete with foreigners under a system of free trade, until they are freed from the taxes which press upon their industry.

In the calculation put in about one-half the labourers' earnings go, directly or indirectly, to taxation; I have no doubt that in almost every case at least one-third goes in that way, provided the man be not reduced to the very minimum of subsistence, potatoes and salt. The effect produced on the trade on these articles by the effect of such heavy taxes upon them is, to diminish it in an extraordinary manner, and not merely diminish the home trade, but our colonial trade and our foreign trade.

The present system of finance is rather calculated to press with great severity on the man who has a family, and with less severity on the single man. A citizen of London, having an income of 200 *l.* a year, a wife and three children to support, and a servant maid (the lowest he can have), pays in taxes annually 80 *l.* 10 *s.* 9 *d.* out of his 200 *l.* a year. The rule applies equally, not only to the working man and the farmer, and the manufacturer, but to all persons belonging to the community, that in proportion as they have a larger family to support, and are thereby more exposed to additional expenses, so does the present system of finance accumulate pressure upon them, by the indirect system which collects resources on the articles of subsistence. The middle classes, which form, I would say, the most valuable portion in the community of this country, are grievously oppressed by the present system; many of them are sinking or living upon the principal of their little property, eating, in fact, into their capital. But there is another evil arising from this system, and that is, the labouring classes are not enabled to add to the wealth of the State, to the revenue of the State, by reason of heavy taxation, which precludes their using articles on which every individual, even the poorest, would pay some proportion, which he is not now enabled to do; so that the fundholder would be benefited indirectly by that system of taxing property which I propose, as he would the more easily get his dividends.

The incidence of all taxes fall sooner or later on the consumer; but at present it bears so directly on the consumer, without intervening through the property of the country, that the poor who consume the minimum of the necessaries of life have the greatest burthen. In speaking of the situation of the lower classes, I assume that their condition would necessarily be improved, together with their moral condition and their better feeling, if their means of subsistence were increased.

To give an illustration of the present unequal system of taxation; we tax the hand-loom weaver very highly, but the machine, or the capital which sets that machine in operation, is almost untaxed; therefore, if you tax the hand-loom weaver who throws his shuttle, you should tax the capital which competes with him, or the properties derived from such competition. I advert in that answer to the power-loom, as also to every other species of machinery which comes in competition with human labour (*z*)

Mr. *J. Marshall* says, it is not just that manual power should be severely and heavily taxed, while what is called mechanical power is comparatively untaxed; it is neither just nor politic; it is as impolitic as it is unjust (*a*).

There is the smuggler, the illicit dealer; the reason that man can afford to smuggle is, that there is a difference of price in the production of the article in one country and in the other, in the same way as in this town there might be two people having the manufacture of porter or ale, if one paid the malt tax and the other not, the one free from the malt tax could sell the beer cheaper than the other (*b*).

It is, however, denied by one witness that taxation is the immediate cause of the distress of the hand-loom weavers; the argument used is as follows: A spinner will earn four times as much as the weaver; they go to the same taxed market, the commodities are taxed to all labourers alike; and if they are all taxed alike, if there are no other causes that have reduced wages to such a degree, what is the reason of the difference? If that was the operating cause, we should suppose a spinner must have been reduced as well as the weaver, and when the cloth is sold in either the home or the foreign market, the labour of the spinner and the weaver must have been equally combined to produce it; then, if taxation be the only cause of the reduction of the weavers' wages, it seems anomalous that the wages of the spinners have not been reduced in an equal proportion, and hence we look for some other cause (*c*).

(*z*) R. M. Martin, esq., 11 July 1834. Q. 3871-3883. 3890-3892. 3968-3969. 3951, 3952, 3901, 3902.
(*a*) Mr. J. Marshall, 24 March 1835. Q. 390. (*b*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5595.
(*c*) William Longson, 22 July 1834. Q. 6738.

SECTION VIII.—*Corn Laws.*

Sect. 8. Corn Laws.

CONNECTED with taxation is the question of corn laws, the evidence adduced on which shows thus: One main cause of the distress of the hand-loom weavers is a reduction of wages, which has been carried to an unnecessary extent; but it is not an opinion among the weavers that the corn laws operate very injuriously against them; it is not their opinion generally. I question, if the corn laws were repealed, whether food would continue low for any length of time, and my reason for so saying is this, that if foreign corn comes in in abundance you will very soon destroy the capability of the farmer to compete with the foreigner, which would in time throw the land out of cultivation; and when the foreigner perceived that, he would raise the price of his grain in our market, which would destroy the profit of the manufacturer who exchanged his goods for that article; and just in the same way would foreign thrown silk admitted free into our market destroy the throwing of silk here, which, when the foreign thrower would perceive, he would raise the price of his thrown silk in our market, which would eventually disable our manufacturers from competing with them upon any terms whatever; and thus our whole trade, both weaving and throwing, would be given away. I conceive the British farmer and the British weaver to be sailing in the same boat together.

It cannot be denied that corn is cheaper now than what it has been known to be for some years; but the small difference which that makes in the price of bread so little affects the whole of his week's wages, it is hardly felt. If every other article were reduced in the same proportion as bread, then the weaver might feel it; but 2 *d.* or 4 *d.* in the week is but a small advantage to the weaver. If the farmers and farm labourers had a better price for their corn, and were so enabled to consume more fabrics woven by the weavers, a small additional price of corn would not affect the weaver, provided our home consumption were increased to any great degree; because it would only affect his bread, and not the other articles of consumption. The weavers were better off when bread was 2 ½ *d.* a pound, and they getting 20 *s.* and 24 *s.* a week, than they are now that it is 1 ½ *d.*, and are getting but 7 *s.* or 8 *s.* a week (*d*).

Richard Needham says, We complain much more of the unjust favour that has been shown to the possessors of fixed money incomes than we do of the operation of the Corn Bill, which is to protect the landed proprietors; we have not the same objection to the Corn Law as to those men receiving large sums of money, wages, salaries, and so on. We think it more unjust for the Government to protect the fundholder and the monied interest of the country than the landed interest. (*e*).

And *Edward Good* observes, since the decline in the price of corn I do not think we have been better off; I think our wages have kept pace with the decline of corn, and gone before it in many instances (*f*).

SECTION IX.—*Currency.*

Sect. 9. Currency.

MUCH of the general distress pervading the country is attributed to the contraction of the currency.

Mr. *Marshall* thus explains the connexion between the circulating medium and machinery: I do not confine the cause exclusively to mechanical power, but think that the uncontrolled and extended application of mechanical power was the first great cause of that depression; the steam-engine was the first great cause of that extraordinary and unparalleled development of power which Great Britain has progressively evidenced since 1786 or 1788, when it first began to show itself. It sustained a war of 20 years' duration, and an increase of 20,000,000 *l.* per annum of annuities, which the war gave rise to; which increase of annuities, so far from being seen to be a burthen, when all the interests of the empire are viewed in combination, and in due relation to each other, will be seen to be an indispensable part of the combination, and necessary as a compensating lever to the extraordinary force of the mechanical power. It was the sudden change of action, or cessation of augmenting that compensating lever internally, and thereby diverting the surplus resources of the country into external channels, that has led to such extreme privation among the hand-loom weavers and some other order of labourers. It was not till after the close of the war in June 1815, and the great change in the funding and other monetary operations of Europe which followed that event, that machinery began to operate banefully. It is therefore to be inferred that the labouring people may go on well with an extension of machinery, if properly controlled, and other things being duly regulated; it is an affair of regulation entirely. Thus machinery in the abstract, or any extension of it, is not injurious to any community; most certainly not; if properly controlled, it is susceptible of conferring a progressively increasing advantage to mankind at large, as certainly as for 20 years past it has operated banefully; it is for want of proper regulation that the distress which I attribute to machinery has arisen (*g*).

Mr. *Burges* corroborates Mr. Marshall; he says that by the totally unrestrained use of machinery, and a fixed metallic standard of value regulated by one, and that the most precious commodity, gold, the public creditor, the civil, naval, and legal functionaries will be able to force the people of Great Britain to work at terms by which potatoes alone, or perhaps buttermilk, will be within their reach. To that conclusion must we come at last, most assuredly. I have watched the progress of this gradual deterioration, and precisely as machinery has increased, and the metallic currency come more completely into operation, a rapid diminution of the value of labour has been going on, nor was there any improvement in various trades, until, to make use of a common expression, the screw on the currency was loosened (*h*).

The fearful consequences of contracting the circulating medium in the present position of England are thus clearly laid down by a weaver (*John Boyd*): There are other causes besides home competition

(*d*) John Scott, 11 April 1835. Q. 2575, 2576. 2599-2604. (*e*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5569.
(*f*) Edward Good, 14 April 1835. Q. 3714. (*g*) Mr John Marshall, 24 March 1835. Q. 299-304.
(*h*) George Burges, esq., M. A., 24 July 1834. Q. 7280.

PART II. CAUSES OF DISTRESS. Sect. 9. Currency.

tion to which I attribute the fall in price; as to the cause, generally speaking, it is not altogether looked into; it is not properly understood by the general body; but the intelligent of them attribute it, and that would be my feeling, to the effect of what is vulgarly called Peel's Currency Bill on machinery. I have conceived that it has been the cause of reducing the quantity of money, or of contracting the currency; now, under such circumstances as these, it must be a general evil to the country. The higher the circulation of money in these cases so much the better: as we stand on artificial ground as compared with the rest of Europe, this becomes necessary, on account of the great burden of the national debt of the country; for an artificial burden to bear, it becomes absolutely necessary that it should have artificial means of support. If the value of labour be 200,000,000*l.* yearly, and the taxation 50,000,000*l.*, it is clear that there is one-fourth of it taxation, paid out of this 200,000,000*l.* We shall suppose then by Peel's Bill, or any other measure, the currency is restricted to 100,000,000*l.*, being still the yearly value of labour; if we pay still 50,000,000*l.* it makes the burden double. I might also add with safety, that if the income of other classes, productive and unproductive, were reduced proportionally as the weavers are, it would be impossible to pay the taxation, and a national bankruptcy would be the inevitable consequence (*i*).

Mr. *Thomas Myerscough* thinks that the pressure upon the labouring people has been increased instead of being diminished by the return to gold payments. In consequence of the return to gold money, it has reduced the quantity of circulating paper, and while this has been going on there has been an increased production. This has lowered the price of commodities and of every description of labour, and consequently placed the labourer in a much worse situation than he was before, because it has not only left him with all those circumstances to contend with, but it has done more, it has doubled the pressure of taxation upon him, and this taxation still remains stationary, while the labourer is remaining under all the difficulties of his situation, produced by a reduction of his wages. Nominally there is not the same amount of taxation now upon the labourer that there was at the close of the war, but relatively to the reduced quantity of the circulating medium, and also relatively to what it would purchase of the conveniences and comforts of life; the taxation remains not quite nominally the same as it was before, but it is much heavier in proportion to what he paid at the close of the war.

The falling profits of trade I attribute to the general increase of production and the alteration of currency (*k*).

Mr. *Oastler* says, I should say, generally speaking, with regard to the operatives, that their condition, as far as I can form a judgment, got worse on the change of trade from war to peace; but I have observed a more rapid growth for the worse since Sir Robert Peel's Bill passed. I think I am speaking the truth, when I say that the change began on the change from the war trade to the peace trade; but certainly there has been a great deal more distress since Sir Robert Peel's Bill than there was before; that was in the year 1819, I believe (*l*).

Richard Needham says, In 1826 the 1*l.* notes were suppressed, and less money was of course in circulation in consequence of that suppression. The operations in the currency had a material effect on wages; I am sure it had; if the currency was reduced to 40 or 50 millions, which I understand was the case, the same wages could not be paid when there was not money to pay them with; if the circulation amounts to 60 millions, and it is reduced to 30 millions, we should only be paid 10*s.* in the pound. The operations upon the currency have therefore had a very material effect in reducing weavers to the destitute state they are in. Those operations on the currency have enabled those who receive dividends, and all those who are living upon fixed property and incomes, to purchase three or four times as many of our pieces with the same money as they could do before those alterations. At one period of time, my year's rent would have enabled my landlord only to purchase a load and a half of meal, now he can purchase four; so that though the money rent is the same, my landlord gets three times more meal than he did. Thus it appears clear that there is one party in the state possessing immense wealth, whose property has been amazingly augmented by the operations on the currency, and that the hand-loom weavers and their employers have been subjected to a reduction in their incomes in an inverse ratio to the increase of the incomes of those living upon fixed property, and that is one great grievance (*m*).

Sect. 10. Slaughter-houses; Embezzlement; Smuggling; and Twist Exportation.

SECTION X.—*Slaughter-houses*; *Embezzlement*; *Smuggling*; *and Twist Exportation.*

THE causes under this head I have grouped in one section, because they are mere incidental results springing from anterior circumstances, and also because they are but briefly alluded to in the evidence before me.

(A.)—*Slaughter-houses* are thus explained by Mr. *Oastler*:

I am sure the present effect of free labour is poverty, distress and death. The effect of the reduction of wages upon the supply of goods is, it increases the quantity, because the manufacturers generally act upon the foolish plan of reducing wages, and then the weaver has to make more goods, in order to provide for himself and his family, and thus the quantity increases. The wisest plan, in case of a great quantity of goods being on hand, is to reduce the quantity of making (*i. e.* to shorten the hours of labour), and to keep wages up. The generality of manufacturers, immediately that the price falls, reduce their wages, and it is impossible but that the men must try to make more goods to obtain the same necessaries; and the fall in the price is generally, at least very frequently, produced by the slaughter-house system of trade, which is as contrary to the old John Bull system of trade as is possible; persons who have immense wealth, and who take advantage of the distress of manufacturers, and absolutely live upon getting that which is worth 100*l.* for 70*l.*, and then those goods are brought into the market, and the honest manufacturer who wishes to live must feel the effects, and then he has to reduce his wages in consequence. The market being supplied with goods gives those parties an opportunity of purchasing them for less than they cost. That system has not operated so very

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(*i*) John Boyd, 3 April 1835. Q. 971–975. (*k*) Mr. Thomas Myerscough, 16 July 1834. Q. 4751–4753. 4885.
(*l*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3757, 3758. (*m*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5560–5566.

very many years; but I know some houses, I do not think it is right to mention the names here, who have risen to opulence by that system, and that alone; and I know many houses who were very rich before that system began, and who have become much richer by following that system. Persons of that class get into Parliament sometimes, and talk of prosperity with a very great vengeance, because they have been able to thieve so many thousand pounds a year out of the poor manufacturers. I know one of them that is in Parliament now, and I could mention some of his tricks. I know this as a fact, that he will follow this plan; he will go to a manufacturer in the manufacturing district who is not very wealthy, but who is very anxious to do a great deal of business; this man has some good customers, and by degrees this slaughter-house man will get an agent who is very quick to wheedle him, and wheedle him out of his customers, and then he will say, "Now you will make goods according to my mind, and you shall send every piece up to London, and you shall draw upon me at three days' sight for all the goods you make." Now this is a very great temptation to a man who wishes to do a great deal of business and is not very wealthy, and the goods come up, and the first two or three lots are allowed to be very good and very right, and the bills are accepted, and, of course, are paid at that house, because he is a highly "respectable" (?) British merchant. Then in the course of a little time some excuse is sent; the bills always find their way to London as soon as the goods, sometimes they come a week before and get into the banker's hands, being post-dated; that proves that the poor fellow wants money very badly for his work and goods. These bills come up beforehand; they are sometimes drawn a week or ten days beforehand; the banker, when he has seen them pass for a few times all right, will advance a little upon them before they take date. In a little time afterwards there is some excuse made by the slaughter-house man. Perhaps the goods are said to be not of good quality, and a letter goes into the country to the poor manufacturer, to say that he must wait a little time, and that the bill will be accepted. Then the poor man writes up to say that he is very poor and must have it; and then they write back to say that the goods have been examined, and they are sorry to say that they are of an inferior quality, or of an inferior colour, or there are some spots about them, (such is the excuse,) and there must be an allowance made; sometimes five per cent. is taken off, or it goes up to 10 per cent. The poor fellow has got his bill under lock and key with his banker; his banker has advanced a little money upon it, because the former bills had got right through; and then the banker is very anxious, and he is obliged to go to the banker and see if he cannot quiet him; and then he writes very strongly to say that he must have this bill paid, and in the course of a week or 10 days; the result is, that the poor manufacturer is obliged to take 5 per cent. or 7 ½ or 10 per cent. off. His credit is ruined with the banker, and he knows that his credit is ruined in the general market; he has lost his former connexion also, and he is completely in the hands of this party in London, whom I call a thief, worse than a highwayman or robber ten times over; and this is the practice that I know has been followed, within my own knowledge. I could mention half a dozen names of "respectable" houses, so called (*n*).

(B).—*Embezzlement* is detailed by Mr. *Makin*, when asked what has been the cause or causes of the wages having been so amazingly reduced: One is, the unrestricted power to reduce wages diffused amongst the large body of manufacturers dispersed over the kingdom, without the power of communication one with another, which has enabled a man silently to reduce the wages of his labourers whenever he has found that he could not get a market for his goods at such a profit as he deemed necessary; another cause is the introduction of embezzled materials, which has gone on progressing to my knowledge for 40 years, from the testimony of men on whom I can rely, and my own observation, that embezzled materials are openly purchased, and the purchasers of them are openly known, and whose cloth is bought by the most respectable merchants and manufacturers, under the belief that they are made partially out of embezzled materials, and which production of embezzled materials, as they cost less than the honest yarn can be bought for, enables these manufacturers to bring in their goods at a less cost than the honest manufacturer can do; that embezzlement is made both from the stocks of manufacturers of pieces and from spinning masters. I have seen yarn offered for sale which I know has come direct from the mill. I know individuals who have been servants to manufacturers, who occupy situations that one would call respectable, and their employment has been in sorting embezzled weft, which has been bought at a price from one-third to one-half its value. Another cause of the reduction of wages has been the want of standard widths of cloth; we will say a six-quarters cloth originally was made of 56 inches wide, to finish something like six quarters out of the loom; some manufacturers have now reduced them to 43, and some to 42, in the rate of what are called six-quarters; it is about that when a manufacturer goes into the market with a fair width of cloth, say 43 inches, and he calls the six-quarters 60 jaconet, and another manufacturer goes with the same name only of 42 inches wide; the quantity of square yards of cloth is as seven to eight, consequently the manufacturer of the broad cloth must charge his cloth one-eighth more than the manufacturer of the narrow cloth. As a proof of the prevalence of embezzlement, I have a piece here which I will prove to the satisfaction of any gentleman conversant with the manufacture, is made out of twenty different kinds of yarn; I have also a letter from Mr. Thomas, the deputy constable of Manchester, stating his knowledge that the practice of embezzlement is beyond all belief or calculation; I have also hand bills that have been published in Manchester, stating that very large quantities of this sort of materials were seized, and advertising for the owners; and notwithstanding the fact of this, the state of the embezzlement laws is such that the conviction of the party cannot be obtained; I think these are the three conspiring causes (*o*).

(C.)—*Smuggling*, which refers to the silk trade, is thus adverted to by Mr. *Ballance:*

There has been more smuggling since the duty was reduced in 1829 than there was before; that is, from 1826 to 1829. I attribute the increase of smuggling to the want of vigilance in the customs. In those cases in which smuggling has been brought home to individuals, the penalties have not been exacted to the full. There was a compromise in the case of Leaf, contrary to the remonstrance of the trade. There is an indisposition on the part of the persons empowered to enforce the payment of the penalties (*p*).

(D.)—*Cotton*

(*n*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3777-3791. (*o*) Mr. John Makin, 17 July 1834. Q. 5036.
(*p*) Mr. Ballance, 16 June 1834. Q. 146-150.

PART II. CAUSES OF DISTRESS.

Sect. 10. Slaughter-houses; Embezzlement; Smuggling; and Twist Exportation.

(D.)—*Cotton Twist Exportation.*—This, as a cause of the weaver's distressed condition, and as tending to injure ultimately our trade in cotton goods, is detailed by Mr. *Hitchin* and Mr. *Gardner*.

Mr. *Hitchin* says, There is another cause for the depression of the weaver's condition; the exportation of twist is another cause; on account of laying protecting duties upon all our manufactures, and receiving yarns with no duty scarcely. I suppose that is most in the German states. The late duties that have been imposed on our manufactures in the German states is operating at this day very much against our manufacture. There is not that demand there was. I was speaking to a printer, who is well known I dare say; it is a house I have printed a good deal with myself in muslins, and it is about a fortnight since I met with one of the principals of the house, and asked him if he was very busy; he said, "No, quite the reverse to that;" and I said, "Why are you so slack?" "Why, we are doing nothing with the Germans to what we used to do." And I said, "The duties are heavy;" he said, "Yes." He did not state what they were, but however, the next market day I met with his principal man in the warehouse, and I stopped him, and mentioned the circumstance that I understood they were slack. "Yes," he says, "we are;" and I said, "I suppose it is owing principally to our doing nothing with the Germans now scarcely, in consequence of these heavy duties?" "No," he says, "very little." I says, "Do you know what the duties are?" "Well," he says, "I could tell you; a piece of grey cloth that is worth 9*s.* in this market, sent to Germany in that state would have to pay 7*s.* duty." That would make it 16*s.* Then I said, "They admit our yarn without duty;" "Yes," he says; and I says, "With a view to employ the population?" "To be sure," he says. I think the great facility which foreigners have, from receiving our twist, and the easy terms on which they admit our yarn into their market, encourages the foreign weaver at the expense of our weaver; that is my firm belief (*q*).

Mr. *Gardner* remarks, that two of the main causes of the reduction of the wages of the hand-loom weavers are, the introduction of the power-loom and the foreign competition; but I think that one main ingredient in the cause of reduction of the wages of the hand-loom weavers is the increase in the export of cotton yarn; it is that which has produced the competition; they could not compete with us, unless we supplied them with yarn. If we had retained the manufacture of the yarn instead of exporting it, we should have maintained the manufacture longer in our hands; but the foreign nation seeing, or at least supposing, that was the secret of our wealth, they adopted it. But as the machinery connected with hand-loom weaving is comparatively of no value to that of spinning, if we had not permitted them to receive the cotton yarn, they would have been a much longer time in becoming manufacturers and competitors. I think that the Continental manufacturers would not have been in their present state, perhaps for 50 years to come, had it not been for the export of yarn (*r*).

I have now completely analyzed the causes assigned for the distress detailed in Part I., and endeavoured, with as much perspicuity and brevity as possible, to bring the leading points into relief, in order that the Honourable House may be enabled, by a due understanding of the causes, to judge calmly and disinterestedly as to the remedies proposed by the several witnesses, and which will be found detailed in the ensuing Part.

(*q*) Jonathan Hitchin, esq., 13 April 1835. Q. 2996–2999. (*r*) Robert Gardner, esq., 10 April 1835. Q. 2287–2292.

PART III.

REMEDIES FOR THE DISTRESS.

Section
1.—A minimum rate of wages to be established.
2.—Boards of Trade.
3.—Taxation of machinery, or reduction of taxation on the necessaries of life. Taxation in connexion with the currency, and also in connexion with the corn laws.
4.—Prohibitory duties. Embezzlement laws. Stamp indentures. Bleaching stamp: and Emigration.

Section I.—*A Minimum Rate of Wages to be established.*

THE leading remedy suggested for the relief of the distressed condition of the hand-loom weavers, is the establishment, by legislative enactment, of a minimum rate of wages throughout the United Kingdom, below which no manufacturer shall be permitted to descend; the minimum to be fixed for the time being by striking an average from the wages paid by a given number of the best-paying masters in each district, to be regulated from time to time either by arbitrators appointed by Government, or by a general board of trade in London, or by local boards of trade formed in each manufacturing district. A great mass of the evidence adduced hinging on this point particularly, in reference to the Parliamentary enactment proposed by the Hon. Member for Oldham, I commence laying before the Committee a faithful analyzation of the whole of the evidence *pro* and *con* on the subject, prefacing it with the claim put forth for legislative protection by the weavers, on the ground of labour being, of all species of capital, that which requires most protection from the State. I have, in every instance, allowed the witnesses to express their sentiments in the *vivâ voce* testimony given in to the Committee, and merely added copulative conjunctions, &c., to form consecutive sentences and paragraphs; the authority for each opinion being given in a foot note, together with the date of the evidence.

Necessity for protecting labour.—It is asserted that labour, like every other marketable commodity, should find its own level: I do not think that there is a similarity between what is called capital and labour; the distinction as it appears to me is this:—Capital, I can make out to be nothing else but an accumulation of the products of labour; and the very supposition that a man has capital, includes in it that he has the power of refusing to part with his articles if an insufficient price be offered for them. In the dealings of capitalists with each other, they are generally the one as much in need of buying as the other is of selling, and they can either of them abstain from buying or selling if they consider improper terms are demanded of them. But how stands the case with the labourer? Labour is always carried to market by those who have nothing else to keep or to sell, and who, therefore, must part with it immediately, whether the price pleases them or not, or suffer privations, most likely severe want: labour is always purchased by capitalists, who can abstain from purchasing until they can have it on their own terms, without suffering either privation or want. That, Sir, I presume to call one great distinction essential to the very existence of labour and capital. Another is, that all kinds of commodities (capital or accumulations of the products of labour) having assumed a tangible, visible, substantial form, can be retained if an inadequate price be offered for them, and the fortune of another day, week, month, year, be tried for them, as they will generally keep for some time without suffering much damage; many of them will keep any length of time without any damage at all. But how fares labour in this respect? the labour which I ought to perform or might perform this week, if I, in imitation of the capitalist, refuse to part with it, that is, refuse to perform it, because an inadequate price is offered me for it, can I bottle it? can I lay it up in salt? In what way can I store it, that, in imitation of the capitalist, I may either get the same price for it, or a higher or lower price, as the case may be, at some future period? That I presume to call another essential difference inseparable from the very nature of labour and capital These two distinctions between the nature of labour and capital, (viz. that labour is always sold by the poor, and always bought by the rich, and that labour cannot by any possibility be stored, but must be every instant sold or every instant lost,) are sufficient to convince me that labour and capital can never with justice be subjected to the same laws: and I must continue to be of that opinion, until somebody convinces me that these distinctions do not exist, or that their existence forms no real difference.

I do not wish to withdraw what protection capital has, but I do say that labour ought not to be left unprotected. We see the shopkeeper protected by the licence of the hawker, and we see the land protected by the corn law, that both the land and the shopkeeper may pay their taxes; but the labourer, while he pays his taxes, is altogether unprotected. What the weavers seek is, that they may have that protection extended to them which is extended to other parties in the State. (*a*).

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(*a*) John Scott, 11 April 1835. Q. 2685-2688.

The remedy required appears to be, to create a competition amongst manufacturers to give good wages, by protecting those who are disposed to do so, placing the controlling power of regulating wages in their hands, instead of allowing that power to be, as it now is, in the hands of those who generally take the lead in reducing wages. A plan of taking periodical averages of wages paid for all sorts of hand-loom weaving, on which to found a minimum, has been suggested to effect this object, as preferable to boards of trade composed of masters and men. The former plan has been discussed amongst the weavers since the Report of the Committee was framed, and has met pretty generally with their approval (*b*).

The following is the proposed Act of Parliament founded thereon :—

Mr. Fielden's Bill.—" Whereas great distress and suffering exist amongst a very numerous class of artisans in this kingdom, who are employed in the manufacture of silk, woollen, cotton and linen upon hand-looms, by reason of the unequal and inadequate wages that they are paid for their work, by manufacturers who employ them ; and whereas it has become expedient to remedy the same, by adopting a regulation to determine from time to time the lowest rate of wages that shall be paid by any manufacturer to any hand-loom weaver employed in the manufacture of silk, woollen, cotton and linen ; Be it therefore enacted, by and with the consent, &c., that from and after the passing of this Act, schedules shall be prepared by and under the direction of His Majesty's Government, and sent to the churchwarden, overseer, constable, writer or clerk, or to one of them, in every parish, township or vill, &c. in the United Kingdom, where hand-loom weaving is given out to work, requiring a true return to be made, within 30 days after receipt of schedules, by every such churchwarden, &c. to whom such schedules shall have been directed, of the different descriptions of manufacture carried on upon hand-looms in such parish, &c., and of the name or designation by which such manufactured goods are there known and distinguished, and of the wages at which such work is given out, and is then and there paid for the same by the fewest number of manufacturers and their agents who individually and collectively put out to work and make, or are reputed to make, the greatest number of webs, cuts or pieces of the same sort individually, and one-half of such goods, webs, cuts or pieces collectively, which are then and there and in any other place manufactured by such manufacturers on hand-looms, from any of the aforesaid materials, and of whatever description. The information respecting the wages at which each sort of work is given out and paid to be collected and obtained from those manufacturers or their agents who individually and collectively, as aforesaid, make or are reputed to make one-half of the goods, webs, cuts or pieces, of the same description which are then and there, or in any other township, manufactured by such manufacturers, or from the weavers in their employ, or from both the said parties : and both are hereby required to give a true statement of such wages in writing, signed by the person making it, when applied to by the person hereby authorized to demand the same, for the purpose of making the returns required by the schedules. That within 30 days after such returns have been made to His Majesty's Government, or to those whom they may authorize to receive the same, the said authority shall ascertain, from the schedules or returns, the highest wages paid by such a number of manufacturers (where the number in any township, &c. exceeds two) as shall in the schedules of each description of manufacture constitute a majority of one or two, as the case may be, for each of the sorts of hand-loom manufacture designated or known by the same name or description, and given out to work as such in the parishes, townships, &c. respectively from whence the returns have been sent ; and the average rate of wages paid by such majority of manufacturers so elected out of the returns from every parish, township, &c. respectively, shall, for the purposes of this Act, determine the lowest wages to be paid to the hand-loom weaver for each of such descriptions of manufacture in each of the said parishes, &c. from whence the returns have been sent. That where in any township, &c. the number of manufacturers making one-half of any description of cloth there made on hand-looms shall only amount to two, the medium wages paid by the two shall be taken to be the average wages for such township, &c., and where, in any township there is only one making such half, the wages of such manufacturer shall be taken to be the average for that township. That such average wages having been ascertained, as aforesaid, His Majesty's Government, or such person as they may authorize, shall, by a communication to be made to every manufacturer, or to the agent of every manufacturer who has the giving out of work, through the medium of the churchwarden, &c., in such parish or township as the returns were sent from, direct and require that the said average wages shall be the lowest wages that shall be paid by any manufacturer, or by any agent of any manufacturer, in such parish, township, &c., during the next three months, and for each and every of the sorts of work that were returned in the schedules as being there wove upon hand-looms ; and the churchwarden, &c. shall sell printed lists or tables, signed by him, of the wages so required and directed to be paid, to every weaver applying for the same, and lists or tables of the lowest wages to be paid for every description of manufacture on hand-looms in every township comprised in the returns, shall be published in the London Gazette, by order of His Majesty's Government, or the person whom they may authorize, every three months, immediately after the averages have been ascertained and directed to be paid, as abovesaid. That at the end of three months from the time when the lowest wages shall have been determined as aforesaid, and shall have been directed to be paid, and at the end of every succeeding three months, during the continuance of this Act, the average wages for each sort of work shall be ascertained, and the payment of such average wages enjoined on every manufacturer, or the agent of every manufacturer, and lists or tables of the wages required to be paid circulated among the weavers, and published in the London Gazette, in manner abovesaid. That to prevent evasions and infractions of this Act, from alterations in the length of the web, piece or cut, the fineness of the reed, the counts of the yarn, the number of shoots in the inch or otherwise, between the times of taking the averages, and with an intent to evade paying the wages directed by this Act to be paid, and to determine disputes relating thereto between the manufacturers, or their agents, and their hand loom weavers, be it further enacted, that from and after the time when the lowest rate of wages to be paid shall have been once directed as aforesaid, if any dispute shall arise between any manufacturer and any hand-loom weaver, touching anything required to be done or observed by virtue of this Act, the party supposed to be aggrieved shall apply to any magistrate acting within the division or hundred in which such parish, &c., aforesaid is situate, who shall direct that the parties between whom the dispute has arisen

(*b*) John Fielden, Esq. 12 March 1835.

arisen shall each of them choose two persons out of their respective classes, and who reside within 20 miles of the place where the dispute has arisen, to whom the case in dispute shall be referred; and if the said so selected four persons do agree, and give in writing to the parties in dispute what they consider just and fair to be done between the parties, their decision shall be binding; and if either party refuse to agree to such decision, the magistrate shall be authorized to enforce the same. That when the referees cannot agree, they shall appoint one person to settle the matter laid before them, and his decision shall be binding, and shall be enforced in the manner last abovesaid." Another clause might be added, to ensure its better observance, making it a misdemeanor to violate the Act; but I should prefer, in the first instance, any dispute being settled by reference, as there proposed. [30th July 1834].

The evidence adduced in favour of some enactment similar to the foregoing has been almost unanimous, both by manufacturers and operatives; the only differences being on the details of the measure as to practically carrying it into effect; even the few who question the possibility of regulating the wages admit the justness of the principle, and the advantages derivable from protecting good-paying and well-disposed masters against the reduction of wages by manufacturers who seek every possible increase of profit by abstracting from the weavers' pittance of wages.

Mr. *John Makin*, an intelligent manufacturer, says, wages form so small a portion of all the branches of manufacture, that they might be raised, so as to place the weaver in far better circumstances, without in any way injuring the trade; the wages of the branch in which I am engaged form only about three eighths of the cost of the goods. Looking at what has fallen under my own observation, I have seen some particular kinds of cloth, owing to the rise of cloth, advancing from 4 *s.* 6 *d.* to 5 *s.* 10 *d.* within the last 20 months; also, considering the small portion of the cost of the article which the wages now form, and considering that the purchaser would have confidence in the price of goods remaining where they are, or ascending, I consider that they might be raised equivalent to putting it in the power of the manufacturer to pay 25 per cent. more wages than he does now. In the last December but one there was a certain species of cloth, which was sold at 4 *s.* 6 *d.* the piece; and in a very short time they have risen to 5 *s.* 10 *d.*, all owing to the rise of cotton; and the price is obtained as readily now as when it was 4 *s.* 6 *d.*; there is sufficient wealth in this country to give employment, at adequate wages, to all branches of industry. The consumers in the country could well afford to pay an additional increase in the price of a gown; if the wages were raised 25 per cent., and a lady had six yards of muslin in a gown at 1 *s.* a yard, it would not advance the price of that gown 1 *s.* I do not believe that any lady would object to give 1 *s.* more if she thought it would contribute to give comfort and happiness to thousands; I am sure she would be very happy to do it.

This increase of wages, by raising, in the same degree, all those articles which are in use among the weaving population, would tend to increase that portion of the revenue which is collected upon the necessaries of life; they would use more tea, more sugar, more tobacco, more malt, more of everything that is taxable; therefore this 25 per cent. would render the people not only more willing, but more able, to bear that large and oppressive taxation which the former witness stated to be the great grievance pressing upon the industrious classes; I know that whilst the wages were good, the people were excessively loyal; and they would laud that government to the skies which would improve their condition, be it ever so little. I do not think they would ever think about the fundholder if they got tea and sugar, and coffee and tobacco, and the other comforts of life; they would not even grudge the Civil List and the Pension List. I know that when the wages were high, a man would have been knocked down for mentioning anything of the sort. I have two or three individuals in my eye, who were in serious danger for being reformers of the old school. Indeed it would be for the interest of the fundholder, and the military and naval and judicial characters who are supported out of the public taxes, if those parties were able to pay them without feeling themselves under the necessity of going to the workhouse, and in constant and habitual privation from the low rate of their wages. The wife or the daughter of a fundholder, or of a judge, would do well to consent to pay this additional shilling upon the gown with which they are clothed; I believe they would not only consent to it, but if the price of the article were raised it would be more esteemed. It has now become low to a proverb, and despicable on that account.

The landowner, who has got a contingent prohibition to the introduction of corn in his favour, ought to be willing that his wife and daughter should pay 1 *s.* more for their gowns than they do at present. A minimum rate for the price of weaving would, I am sure, have a tendency to bring about these desirable changes. It is possible to fix the minimum rate of wages for a time, without the consultation of either masters or men, because I find, in examining the different rates of wages paid throughout the country, there is a variation of from 25 to 30 per cent.; and if we can get those who are paying low to come up to the high price, as I stated before, those that are paying a high price would gradually creep upwards in their wages, and by that means they would secure a rise gradually: but that could only be obtained by very extensive information as to the rate of wages paid throughout the country, and taken at one time; which I know no better plan of acquiring than by issuing schedules for every manufacturer to fill up, stating the rate of wages which he is paying for the fabrics he is making, and then taking those average highest wages, and making them the lowest wages for the time being. By that sort of machinery I consider that the country would be saved from any agitation, and the trade from any discussion as to what prices should be fixed. Those lists, I would propose, should be issued by authorities appointed by Government; all the manufacturers should be registered, and every place should have its office appointed for receiving the registrations, and for collecting these schedules, and transmitting them to London. As to a licence for practising the manufacture to pay for those expenses, I have thought it would be well if the trade were under some restriction. I do not know that I would do more than requiring that every manufacturer should enrol himself. To prevent false returns being given with regard to their wages by manufacturers, I would have a local committee or board appointed to receive those returns, and that committee, being composed of an equal number of masters and weavers, would be able of their own knowledge to ascertain whether they were correct or incorrect; and if they had any doubt, that local board or committee might be empowered to call on that master or manufacturer to administer an oath to him as to the truth or correctness of his statement. The exposure of giving a false return would be sufficient, for no manufacturer likes to incur the odium of the weavers; he is as much dependent upon their good opinion as they are upon him for employment, and at seasons is as much obliged to them for weaving for him as they are to him for their wages. This militates not against the argument that there are persons who will reduce wages to the degree you have described, because there are always

certain kinds of work which certain weavers have a preference for. There are seasons when those kind of works are not in demand. The fancy trade, with which I have been more particularly connected for several years, has periods of demand, and periods when there is no demand; and if a weaver is particularly fond of weaving these kind of cloths, he will consent to a reduction of wages rather than go on to others, on which he is not so well accustomed to labour, and perhaps by that submission he is in some measure a gainer; because the weaver cannot change from one work to another voluntarily, being so poor as to be unable to incur the expense of 5 *s.* or 6 *s.* to get on to another sort of goods, so that his very poverty lays him open to arbitrary reductions which may be made by any master (*c*).

Mr. *Hale*, of Spitalfields, observes, with reference to calling the weavers and their employers together, to fix a rate of wages, which should not be reduced but by a subsequent agreement between the parties: the manufacturers might be called by general advertisement, by hand-bill, or by the ordinary course of calling public meetings: they would meet together, and, in all probability, appoint a committee, and there would be a committee of journeymen; they would have a friendly intercourse, and make a scale, and, after some meetings, they would come to an agreement; when they had done that, I have no doubt that the greatest part of the manufacturers would unite in it, and the journeymen also; and the prices, being fixed, might be advertised, and they would become the standing wages till altered by any subsequent mutual agreement. Supposing that a meeting of the manufacturers in Manchester, for instance, were called, and there did not a majority of the manufacturers attend, I would authorize the parties meeting and the weavers to constitute a body that should fix the rate of weaving, and that that rate should be binding upon the absentees. I do not, however, apprehend that it would be done at one meeting; there would be several meetings before the committee came to an understanding; a thing of that sort cannot be hurried through in one meeting. If three-fourths of the manufacturers were to meet, perhaps half of them would agree; and there are a great many influential members that would attend, and who understood the question; and others who did not attend would be very willing to leave it with them. In all parish business generally not one in ten attends at public meetings; but they all fall in with what has been adopted at the public meeting. What I wish to recommend, as an effectual remedy, is this, whenever such meetings, as that which I have referred to at Bolton, take place in any parish, district or hundred, when the manufacturers and their journeymen have amicably settled what is to be the fair price for labour, when the masters acknowledge that they ought and that they are willing to give it, and the journeymen agree to take it, when such an agreement is signed by the great majority of the resident manufacturers in the district, and by the committee of their journeymen, selected from their body for that purpose, it ought to be considered and to be made as valid as any purchase or any other contract in the kingdom, or, in other words, it ought to be made to be binding upon the whole body of manufacturers and journeymen residing in that district, until it shall be altered by a subsequent mutual agreement. Now, I would ask the most ardent theorist, what is there in this that militates against his favourite system, any more than the common transactions of trade which are taking place every day? Suppose, for instance, that I should go to Manchester to purchase certain goods, and further, that I should enter into an agreement to take a certain quantity to be manufactured per month for the remainder of the year, the executive power knows nothing of this transaction, it cannot interfere; but if either of the parties wish to take an advantage of the other, the law of the land will oblige him to send me the goods agreeably to his agreement, and compel me to pay for them according to my contract. Now, I would again ask, are the principles of free trade violated in either of these transactions? Surely not; the one is an agreement or contract between the masters and their men for goods to be manufactured; and the other an agreement or contract for their purchase and future delivery.

The whole system of policy and government is a system of compromise between what is perfect in theory and what is practicable in execution; and I am well aware that in this imperfect state, with whatever advantages a theoretical project may be magnified, yet, when reduced to practice, it will always exhibit those imperfections to which all human institutions are liable. It has been wisely remarked, that the whole system of life is a series of compromises with unavoidable evil, in which material inconveniences are endured for the acquisition of future good. It is the duty of the Government to protect the weak and defenceless against the rapacity of the strong. It is but a small thing that I am pleading for, when compared with the good to be accomplished by its enactment; for I think it involves the future happiness of our multitudinous poor throughout the kingdom, and the tranquillity of the British empire. I do not ask for legislative interference in the price of labour, nor for the appointment of the magistrate to regulate wages; all I wish to recommend is, for the Legislature to pass a short Act, making the agreements which I have already fully explained valid and binding, until they shall be altered by mutual subsequent agreements.

In the event of the Legislature passing a law upon the subject, I would recommend, if three-fourths of the manufacturers are agreed to fix a rate for weaving, that that rate should be binding upon all in the trade till it was re-established by a subsequent meeting (*d*).

Mr. *Oastler* observes that, if you were to prevent the master manufacturer from employing the weaver at a price that he can afford to give him, you would not throw a great number of the weavers altogether out of employment? if the law did not allow of this present system, all would be alike. We are now talking of altering the law, so that the manufacturer shall not have the power of putting them to death either by starvation or by over-work. There would be plenty of employment for them, at whatever rate of wages you choose to enact. There will be plenty of labour to give a living in this country to every industrious man, else what is our trade worth? If our trade comes to this, that it will not keep the people alive who work, we had better give it up.

I consider that the trade is so cut up, that the exporters are cutting one another's throats. If the wages were higher, the labourer would be enabled to clothe himself, because his wages would be better, and to feed himself, because his wages would be better; and those labourers are the persons who are after all the great consumers of agricultural and manufacturing produce, and not the capitalist, because a great capitalist, however wealthy he is, wears only one coat at once, at least, he certainly does

(*c*) Mr. John Makin, 16 July 1834. Q. 4920–4938. (*d*) William Hale, Esq. 12 July 1834. Q. 4240–4243.

does seldom wear two coats at once; but 1,000 labourers, being enabled to buy a thousand coats, where they cannot now get one, would most certainly increase the trade. Then, in reference to the foreign trade, the foreign gentleman wears one coat only, and I believe the foreign labourer makes his own wearing apparel in most European countries; therefore it would not at all affect them; they would come here for what cloth they wanted; they would send their orders to London or other places, to different merchants, some of whom should get a profit, but not the whole of the profit; the poor workman should be well paid first. At present the foreign trade is carried on in the following way: The English merchants send their goods to different foreign ports, and there they compete with each other, and absolutely cut one another's throats; always giving the foreigner more cloth, &c. for less money.

The Legislature ought to put a stop to the distress. I am a friend to liberty, but certainly not to murder. You never make a law of this House but it interferes with liberty; you make laws to prevent people from stealing, that is an interference with a man's liberty; and you make laws to prevent men from murdering, that is an interference with a man's liberty; then to make a law to tax one if one smokes a pipe, that is an interference with liberty, is it not? I should say that these slaughter-house men shall not do so. I should say, decrease the quantity made, and you destroy the power of those murderers; you cannot do it in any other way. Then establish those Boards that have been spoken of, for the sake of peace and quietness between the masters and the men; I think it would have the most desirable effect in making the masters and men agree. It is the surplus in the market which creates the opportunity for those persons to reduce or destroy wages and profits.

I would limit the production, by limiting the hours of labour. I would shorten the hours of labour. I would give to the Boards of Trade the power of regulating, that they should work so many hours a day. You would not find the men working so many hours unless they were obliged to do it; it is absolute starvation that compels them to work so long hours; they want to have time with their wives and children; they want to have a little employment for their minds, and so on; some of them are extremely intelligent men, and they do not want to be engaged from morning till night. If there was a law to enable them to get a decent living by eight or ten hours' labour, you would not find them thronging the factories and the looms so long as they do. I dare say, however, that if the proper minimum price of labour to the weaver was fixed, that would secure the proper regulation of the time of labour, without having recourse to fixing the number of hours the weavers shall work, because they do not work for the love of work; they want to eat. If the wages were calculated, so that a man could earn a good living in eight or ten hours, I have no doubt that there would be work for the best weavers and for the others also. I say that these men do not like to sit in the looms all the day long; they would like to enjoy themselves as reasonable beings; they feel that it is degrading to them to be treated as they have been, like animals. I assure you they feel no pleasure in eternally pushing the shuttle. They work long hours because they are forced, and thus force others to do the same, viz. more work for less wages.

I think in regard to those places which we call factories, where there are large engines, a law might very easily be made, and could not be at all evaded, that those engines should run so many hours in the day and no longer. But I was asked respecting the weavers; my opinion is, that if a minimum of wages were established for those weavers, their natural wish to get out of the looms would pretty nearly regulate the time.

It is the business and duty of Government to establish some sort of system by which every honest, industrious labourer can live in comfort, and this mode of doing it which is now spoken of does appear to me to be the best mode which Government can possibly propose; they ought to give protection to labour; I consider it the first essential duty of Government to do it, and I do not think that the Government can claim on any ground the allegiance of the operatives, when they see that capital and property are protected, and their labour is left to chance.

As far as my knowledge goes, the hand-loom weavers are a body of all others who have the greatest claim on Government; I think the necessary benefaction ought to be made to them; they have a right to it, for they are generally pressed down to the very lowest pitch of distress; many of them scarcely know that they are human beings (*e*).

Mr. *Thomas Myerscough*, a manufacturer at Bolton, asserts, that the weavers are now in a position which renders it impossible for them to rescue themselves from the grasp of the unproductive classes without the aid of the Legislature. A measure that would restrain competition among manufacturers, so as to adjust more nearly the supply of goods to the real demand, counteract and lessen, to some extent, the influence of the unproductive classes, and benefit, to the same extent, those engaged in agricultural and manufacturing industry, would benefit them. If the Legislature should pass a law, authorizing boards of regulation to fix and to vary, from time to time, the minimum price for hand-loom weaving throughout the country, I have no objection that it should be tried. I have very great doubt whether it could be carried into effect; it certainly would produce a shock in the first instance, and a diminished supply in the next. The shock I anticipate would be produced by an immediate rise to the extent of 25 or 30 per cent., and might prevent manufacturers from going on to the extent that they do at present, and consequently diminish the supply; which diminished supply, as a whole, would, I have no doubt, be beneficial to the manufacturer and workpeople. But except the power-loom were diminished in the same way, the consequence might, by possibility, be very serious to the hand-loom weavers. As to the production of the power loom being also limited in its operation, provided it was found necessary for the safety of the weavers and the spinners, and the country at large, to do so, I should like the Legislature to turn their attention to the matter; and as they are omnipotent, they can perhaps try what they can do upon the subject. Mr. Pitt upon one occasion pronounced Parliament omnipotent, and he stated that the period would arrive when any one manufacturer might reduce the price of labour so as to throw the country into distress, and almost into confusion (*f*).

Mr. *Makin*, also a manufacturer of Bolton, thinks that it would be desirable that some limit or check to that process of reduction should be applied to the trade, for this reason, if for no other: It is

(*e*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3778, 3779. 3783. 3792–3801. 3803. 3807. 3809.
(*f*) Mr. Thomas Myerscough, 16 July 1834. Q. 4839–4846.

is impossible for the weaver, in the present state of things, to pay his way in society, and to continue in that branch of industry, because his materials are wearing out. In the coure of last year I began a manufacture in the fancy line, and before any of my weavers could start in it, I had to advance them, in money, from 1 *l.* to 2 *l.* each, part of which I have not got to this day, and for the repayment of which I had to stop the wages of the weavers at 2 *s.* and 3 *s.* a piece. And in all cases where there is required any fresh manufacture, the master manufacturer has to furnish the weaver with money to begin with; indeed, the weaver is now so poor, that he cannot release his warp from the sizer without first borrowing 1 *s.* I know no check that can be put to this power of reducing the wages, which any individual in the trade has, except a legal one, which should make it imperative upon every man to pay a certain rate of wages, according to the work performed. The means which I would adopt to make that regulation work beneficially both for masters and men, would be to ascertain by actual investigation what rate of wages can be paid, and I would make it imperative upon all classes of manufacturers to pay those wages for these fabrics of cloth. I would do so for two reasons; one is, that by this process the low-paying master would be brought up to the standard of the high-paying master; and the other reason is, that the high-paying master, because he may have a better market than the lower-paying one, would, in order to keep his weavers, be induced to raise his wages still higher; and by that process operating from time to time, I conceive that the interest of the master would be very much consulted, and that the interest of the operatives would also be very much promoted. I consider that the check to any undue rise which would be afforded by the introduction of foreign goods of a like quality into the market, would be quite a sufficient security to the consumer that the masters would not raise the price beyond what was fair and just to the consumer to pay for those articles.

To prevent a ruinous home competition, I would fix a scale of prices upon weaving which would render it impossible to make the goods at a cheaper rate. As far as the wages are concerned, the operation of that would not be to throw out of the trade for a time the person who would offer goods at a price below what would yield him a profit, paying him these fixed wages; it would, however, have a tendency to repress that folly, he knowing that he had not the power to step back on the weaver. It would have a tendency to diminish the spirit of competition; the spirit of competition is not near so great now as when the profits were larger, neither is it as when the price of weaving was so much higher that a reduction could be made, because it is now at that rate of profit that if he takes any thing off, or any thing very considerable, he is a loser; there is no such thing in the trade as a fixed profit (*g*).

William Longson, a weaver of silk at Stockport, observes: Here is an immense number of human beings who are in a state of extreme destitution, by allowing the operation of that system which is contained in the principle of allowing labour to find its own level; those human beings ought to have a better protection from those under whose government they now live, than they have. If I was giving one of my day's labour in exchange for eight or ten of some other man's labour, I should say there was something wrong there; and to bring it nearer to an equality, I should think that there might be allowed an operation under such a law as that which we suggest; there would still be the same effect and the same operation; there certainly would be some; but I do really conceive when labour has been permitted to find its own level in such a manner that it comes to the extinction of human life, and rendering life miserable, and depriving many, not only of the means of education and moral culture, and, what is worse, even an inclination for it, there is something mentally and morally at stake, and that it is necessary to refrain from conformity to a principle of modern political economy, which, even to the extent that we have desired, might be a deviation without any injury to any class whatever. Meetings of manufacturers have been held at Burnley, Manchester and Bolton, for the purpose of trying amongst themselves if they could not, by some arrangement, better the condition of the weavers by fixing rates of wages; such wages as they issued in lists at the time, and expressed their willingness to pay, completely failed; and it is my opinion that by legislative authority, such as is now sought, such efforts must succeed. The merchants and buyers of goods signed a document, emanating from these meetings, expressive of their approbation of the proceedings that had taken place; a great number of manufacturers, in the first place, signed a great number of the documents I looked over; and then an equal number of the principal merchants and the purchasers of goods signed a declaration to this effect: "We, the undersigned, approve of the above declaration, and agree that the paying such a low rate of wages is injurious to the whole trade generally." But the efforts of the manufacturers, uniting with the weavers, have not been equal to the necessity for adopting measures to prevent the reduction of wages, and establishing such lists of prices as they thought they ought to have. I remember in 1829, at the time the Manchester manufacturers declared that others were paying 40 per cent. lower than they were, this was the declaration at Manchester, exclusive of Burnley: but in 1829 there was a declaration published by the Preston manufacturers, that they would employ those weavers who would set up against the low-payers: and there was an effort made at Preston by the weavers and masters to do what is now sought for by legislation, and they felt they could not.

Applications have been before made to Parliament and entertained, to fix a minimum or fixed rate of wages; 40 or 50 years ago there was an application to fix a minimum. In 1823 the weavers of Manchester sent a petition, that was presented by Mr. Huskisson to The House, and it prayed exactly for such a statute as we are humbly endeavouring to obtain now. The reason why that application failed of success, was because it was not sufficiently followed up at that time; but three years or so afterwards there was an application by the Bolton manufacturers to Mr. Huskisson, and Mr. Huskisson did not pay that attention to it that was expected. In order to remove the distress of the weavers, and better their condition, or that it may not get worse than it is, if there should be a law passed, declaring that there should be an account collected of what were the rates of wages paid for the various descriptions of goods, and that sent either to London or to Manchester, or some other large town; let it be ascertained what were the highest rates paid voluntarily; let there be a commencement at that point, and let those from whom it is collected say it shall, and for what time it shall, be paid; but should the necessities of trade or prices render it necessary, it might be altered sooner than the end of six months; trade might bear it for six months. That would cause uniformity in

(*g*) Mr. John Makin, 16 July 1834. Q. 4902–4905. 5187, 5188.

in the selling prices, and I think it would prevent the price of labour from further unnecessary diminution; it would better the prices in some degree, but I do not think it would ever double them. I do not think it is possible to prevent a further decline of wages without the enactment now applied for, or some equivalent one. I am quite confident that wages will descend. I said 10 years ago that nothing could prevent such interminable reductions but such an enactment, or something equivalent. Such reductions must continue till distress pushes some of them into other avocations, or pushes them out of the world. Wages might rise after such an affair as that; but it is a matter of no very happy contemplation to suppose that distress may come in such a degree, that part of the population will be starved out, when there is not one-fiftieth more than what is required; and yet there must be fifty times more suffering than is necessary, from natural consequences, for the sake of one unimportant legislative enactment; and when people are starved out, then, according to the opinion of a literary gentleman, of whose opinions some people think very highly, and of whom I think highly, Mr. Mill, he says that wages, after such a case as this, may rise so as to annihilate the profits of capital: and rather than have an eternal state of competition, trade being overdone at one period, and at another that the profits of capital are annihilated, I am disposed to think that many Parliamentary gentlemen would find a reason for legislative interference then (*h*).

Mr. *John Ashworth*, a woollen manufacturer, thinks that some mode is necessary whereby those people who are now suffering should be enabled by their own earnings to maintain themselves and their families; I think it would be much better for society, and the kingdom at large. Some regulation whereby those that pay the best wages could have a controlling power of regulating the wages to be paid to the weavers, would be a much better mode of regulating wages than that which exists now. If the best and most respectable masters had the control, it would be much better for the workpeople. There are manufacturers who generally take the lead in reducing wages, which other manufacturers, who at the same time complain of those reductions, wish could be avoided; I am sure that is the case; there are manufacturers who have wished they could prevent the reduction of wages. The power of reducing wages rests in the hands of those who show a disposition to do so; and those are the masters who generally pay lower wages and take the lead in reduction. In other words, unrestrained competition, which appears to me to arise from a wish to make a little profit from the reduction before others could avail themselves of it, but then they are not bettered, and society is exceedingly much injured, for the rest of the masters must come down to them; then these lead the way in reducing again; and I have said many times, if there was not a penny a piece given for weaving, the masters would be in no better state than they are for competition, while it is the poor weaver that is crushed to the earth. Therefore these reductions, though they have injured the weaver, have not been any benefit to the masters taken collectively. Reducing the wages leads to an excess of production, injurious both to the master and operative.

From my experience as a manufacturer, if there were a law passed, that it should require returns of the wages paid by the different manufacturers to be sent up to the Board of Trade, or some other office appointed for that purpose, and that the rate of wages should be fixed by law, not to be below the average that one-sixth of the highest-paying masters might be giving at the time this return was made, and that that should be the lowest rate paid for the next three or six months, I think it would have this good effect: it would prevent any futher reductions. The weavers will naturally want to live by their work; if the minimum was not such that they could live by their work, they would feel rather dissatisfied, as they do now; but they would feel satisfied so far, that they could not come lower. If the minimum price fixed was so in any way to pay the weaver better than he is now, I think it would be the beginning of better times; at any rate it would give more confidence to the weaver, he knowing his wages could not be reduced lower than they have been. From my knowledge of the manufacturers, and there are many that have been always averse to reducing wages, such regulation would be satisfactory to those masters that are anxious to keep up wages.

It always appeared to me a difficult thing to legislate about wages; and it has struck me, if it is difficult to legislate for a poor man who has no property at all, we should never legislate for the rich man who has a great deal of property; for the landed proprietor, for instance, we have the corn law, which says that bread shall not come below a certain price: now the landed proprietor is protected by this corn law. If there can be no legislation in favour of the poor hand-loom weaver, that is, if he can have no protection, then the man of wealth should have none; but he has, in the corn law. I say this is not fair play; if the poor man cannot be protected, let neither be protected; let bread come as low as it will. If no interference on behalf of the manufacturer, as a protective measure, be adopted, the repeal of the corn laws, whereby bread might be somewhat, possibly, cheapened, would be no relief to the weaver; for this reason, that the master, without such a protection as you have been suggesting, by which it would be declared that wages should not drop, would say to the weaver, "you can live cheaper now, and we will give you less wages," and the repeal of the corn laws would be of no use; but the repeal of the corn law, with the other thing, would be of great use. A regulation, both in respect of corn and in respect of wages, would be the best; otherwise the rich man has no more right to protection than the poor man. I have not the least wish to injure the rich people, but that the poor were put in a better situation; that would be better for the whole country. So long as there is a regulation for the corn, so long the poor would think The House ought to interfere in the price of labour. If they keep up the price of corn, they should keep up the price of labour. I only wish the poor man to live (*i*).

Richard Needham, a weaver at Bolton, of 49 years' standing, remarks, that the question of the regulation of wages is one of the most important for the well-being of the country that the Legislature can entertain, and is satisfied of its truth from the opinion of one of the greatest men that ever lived in this country, the late Right honourable William Pitt. He says, "I was deputed with Thomas Thorpe, now living, to wait upon that gentleman; we waited upon him, and in the course of the conversation he said, 'Has not the Chancellor of the Exchequer been stating that your wages must never be any higher?' I said he had stated it was his opinion that we never should get any more wages, but that the little we had should be secured by good and wholesome laws. Mr. Addington, now Lord Sidmouth, declared that the little we had should be secured by good and wholesome laws; and that little, instead of being secured by good and wholesome laws, has come down from 24 *s.* to 5 *s.* 6 *d.*

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(*h*) William Longson, 22 July 1834. Q. 6845–6852. (*i*) Mr. John Ashworth, 26 July 1834. Q. 7795–7833

It was in consequence of this declaration that Mr. Pitt put the question, 'Had not Mr. Addington stated so?' We said he had. He said, 'The time will come, and is not far distant, when all your habits are changed, when you have left your linen and linsey-wolsey manufactures, and your small farms are destroyed, and the population are absorbed in the cotton trade in Lancashire.' Then, said he, 'A villain in a town like Bolton, by setting a wicked example, will be followed by all the rest, not because they wish to do it, but because they are forced to do it: then the Legislature must bestir itself, and if they are not sitting, they must be instantly summoned, to put an end to that nefarious practice;' and he said, 'The moment they assemble, that moment the thing must be done, or you will give your trade away, not sell it; you will give it away to France and America; they will receive you with open arms. Every man loves his country; but goad an Englishman, and tell him he cannot live comfortably in his own country, and he will then sell his country.'"

If necessary, regulate both the hand and the power-loom; they are in no very enviable situation. In the piece of manufacture I am the staple manufacturer of, I get 3 *s.* 6 *d.* a week, and the spinner gets 24 *s.*, and the mechanics that make the machinery make 30 *s.*, and the moulder and the founder they get between 30 *s.* and 40 *s.*, and it is all to contribute to make one single piece, and the weaver only gets 3 *s.* I say the Legislature of the country have a right to divide the property; let every man have his equal share; distribute the money equally among the people who produce the piece. Each man should get his due reward who contributes to the production of the cloth. That labour should have its due remuneration, and industry its fair profit (*k*).

Thomas Worsley, a weaver, asserts, that a practical arrangement for the mutual protection of both manufacturer and the weaver might be adopted that would secure advantage to both, viz.: By taking the power out of the hands of the low-paying employer of fixing the rate of wages, and placing it in the hands of the higher-paying master: but it is quite impossible to be done by themselves; it must be done by an authority higher than they, which can be no less than the Legislature of the country. It is necessary, in recommending any measure of that description, to make it as easy of access as possible, and with as little trouble, both to the employer and the employed; and in considering these things, it is also necessary to keep in view the great necessity that exists not to widen the breach that too often exists between the master and workmen, namely, that of ill-feeling and irritation, which often proves very destructive to both; therefore, I should recommend, that in every district throughout the United Kingdom, wherever the manufacture by hand-looms is carried on, that each manufacturer should be bound to make a report every three or six months, as may be fixed by the Act of Parliament, of the wages he pays for the different fabrics he manufactures, and that report to be delivered into the hands of the authority of the town, place or riding in which the manufacturer lives, to the clerk of the peace, the overseer, the constable, or any such authority in office; that those returns should be immediately transmitted to His Majesty's Board of Trade: when all the returns have been made to His Majesty's President of the Board of Trade, that then the highest-paying masters should be collected from the list, and the average taken from the highest-paying masters; and a proclamation from the Crown, or some such authority, to force the average price to be paid by all manufacturers, should be immediately sent to the authority from whence the returns came; from that authority orders should issue, to be given to the various manufacturers as to the lists of prices. As, from the variations that take place in the market, I cannot for a moment contemplate the necessity of a reduction in hand-loom weavers' wages lower than the present price, the highest price that is paid by some manufacturers; I should suppose that the state of the market allowed them to pay that price; the state of the market would allow some that pay much less to pay the same price; therefore, I cannot for a moment think there would be any necessity, that could be well stated, for a reduction in the price as it is now. The price will always regulate itself by the price the manufacturers pay; there is not any manufacturer but will take care not to pay more than the market will bear.

Supposing, from the operation of the plan suggested, the prices should rise for three consecutive series of three or six months, and then, from the accumulation of stock after this rise has taken place, that a temporary fall should be necessary, in order to enable the manufacturers to keep the markets, I would provide for such an exigency thus: if there existed a necessity for the reduction, beyond the last-stated price under the proclamation, or from whatever authority it might issue, it would be then necessary for the manufacturers in the various districts, by petition or otherwise, or the masters from whose lists the last has been taken, to petition or memorialize the board from which the order came, and state the real situation of the market; after the President of the Board of Trade had consulted the feelings of the various manufacturing districts, he should then be supposed to act according to the urgency of the time. I propose these lists should be sent up every three or six months.

I think if the simple plan I have mentioned was carried into effect, and I see no reason why not, because it is not proposed to make a greater breach between the masters and men, but cement their friendship more closely together; and the existence of combinations, and the existence of conspiracies and unions throughout the country carried to the extent they are, will still continue, unless there is a possibility of regulating wages; without that possibility those combinations or conspiracies will still exist; and I think the time of our operatives might be better occupied than in those pursuits that they are compelled from necessity to adopt. Every manufacturer ought to make a return, by a schedule, at certain periods, that would embrace the whole scale of wages, from the highest to the lowest; and a certain number of the highest-paying manufacturers should be selected, from which to strike the average. Suppose there was a return of 600 persons, I should say take one-sixth of the names from those that pay the highest wages, see what the rate paid is, and take the average. The consequence of this system would be, not to throw any persons out of employment, because it is not an advance of wages immediately you go into the market on the passing of the Bill, but only an advance from those that pay the lowest to those that pay the highest. I do not see that it can reduce the wages of weavers, or retrench the produce of their labour. The weavers would work a less number of hours if they had better wages. If they worked less hours there would be an opening for other weavers. I do not think that any attempts would be made either by the manufacturers or by the weavers, from their poverty, to disturb this regulation of wages, and to get the weaver, from his poverty, to agree with the master to take out work, on a private understanding between them, at a wage

(*k*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5621–5624. 5572, 5573.

wage below the wages fixed by law; there might be individual instances of it, but I do not suppose it could exist to any extent, to be injurious; for the weavers, the great body of them, would take care of that, and the great body of manufacturers would take care of it as well; they would be too much alive to their own interests to allow of it. The good sense of the weavers, and the fear of opprobrium from exposure, would induce both parties to avoid any evasion of the law. The same rate of wages should prevail in all places in the United Kingdom, although the expense of procuring materials, and conveying the goods manufactured to market, the price of provisions, house-rent, &c., may be different in different places where the same manufacture is carried on; in my opinion it ought to be one whole arrangement throughout the country. The hand-loom weaver from Manchester, or other places where provisions are dearer than in Scotland, would not move from Manchester to Scotland; but I should have no objection to their removal from our large manufacturing towns(*l*).

William Longson cannot conceive that a number of masters fixing a rate of wages would ever fix it at such a rate as to injure their own business to give it to the weavers; and, when the question is understood, is not apprehensive of anybody else viewing it in that light. The advance to the consumer would be so small that, but for certain circumstances, it would scarcely ever be known; and if there are half a million of persons engaged in, and connected with, hand-loom weaving, they would be brought forward themselves as consumers, and being brought forward as consumers of their own productions, it would to that extent benefit the manufacturers. The power in the home consumers, who would be benefited by the expenditure of the weavers, would enable them very easily to pay any additional price that would grow out of the fixing any minimum rate of wages. With regard to exports, it may even hold good in other countries, from the reductions that have been effected there; notwithstanding what we have heard about foreign rivalry and competition, the truth is, that the competition which has gone on in our own markets, the masters and merchants who have competed against each other in the home markets have done so in the foreign markets, and foreigners are obliged to reduce, though we have carried our happy speculations to the extent of taking away weavers' wages, and paying it away in duties to foreign powers; for they have been as active in laying on duties as we have been in reducing wages and underselling them: foreigners, to protect their own weavers, in proportion as we lowered our price, always put an additional duty upon those articles when they enter into their country. Most of the Honourable Members of the Committee must have heard the boast of our country underselling all the world. How have they done it? by under paying the labourers (*m*).

John Duce, a silk weaver in Spitalfields, of 36 years' standing, entreats Parliament to allow the trade to settle their affairs in a regular and legal way; to meet with the masters and arrange our prices, and the trade wants no more. If the best price now paid (and the argument is sufficient, that some masters do pay it, and they can pay readily and willingly), I want this as a criterion; and if the trade could get this confirmed, so that they could be generally receiving such a price for their labour, they would be satisfied. The view I take of the question is this, that the masters and journeymen shall meet in a regular manner, and settle their differences together, and it shall be confirmed by a magistrate, and then come into a law for a certain time, not permanently, but as circumstances may require. The masters will feel it their duty to have a meeting, they will appoint their committee, and the operatives will do the same; there is a number from each side; these parties will settle this question; these large bodies will delegate bodies of their own. We wish the Legislature to give their sanction to it; and that it shall be permanent for the time agreed upon.

The modes suggested by witnesses who have been examined on this Committee are not exactly the same, but there is one mode which has been suggested, and that is, that inquiry should be made in every district in the kingdom, in every township or parish where manufacture is carried on, as to the rates of wages paid for different sorts of work in those townships, and that the rate of wages paid in the different townships or parishes having been ascertained, the average of the prices paid by a number of those masters who pay the highest wages should form the lowest wages paid for the same description of work for the period of three or six months; that no manufacturers should pay below the average rate that is ascertained; and that at the end of three or six months more a similar inquiry should take place, and the highest-paying masters should again regulate the prices to be paid to the hand-loom weavers. And it has been thought by the witnesses who have given evidence, that such a regulation would prevent any further fall in the wages, and that it might possibly tend to advance them slowly and gradually: the masters that pay the highest price should have a sort of power in regulating the wages. Another proposal is, that every master should be bound to send to the Board of Trade a schedule of the prices he gives, and that some rule should be established in taking the average, either taking one extremity and another, or some of the highest-paying masters, and that an average should be struck upon that; and one witness stated that, supposing 600 manufacturers, the highest paying 100 of those should be taken, and an average struck, and that that should be obligatory upon the whole. But if you derive it from the highest and the lowest, we should be defeated, and gain nothing by it (*n*).

James Brennan, a weaver, of Manchester, says—The only remedy that ever I could think of as a relief to the hand-loom weavers in their present condition was getting all the masters to pay the same price throughout the country; if all masters were obliged to pay the same price, there would be always still some good masters that would strive to raise the price to give it upon the goods. I have that opinion of some masters that they would strive to raise the condition of the weavers if they could; but owing to it being left in the hands of some hard-hearted masters, they are forced to reduce till it has brought it to nothing. If the low-paid wages are raised to the point of the high-paid wages, that would be some relief to the weavers. We are desirous that the power of regulating the wages should be thrown into the hands of the well-disposed masters, and taken out of the hands of those not so well disposed, who now govern the rate of wages. A plan has been suggested to effect that object; it is the Bolton plan, and I approve of it very much; viz., that prices should be sent to commissioners, or men appointed; and that they should regulate the price-schedules, or something of that kind. There would be no difficulty in obtaining those schedules or lists of prices when once

(*l*) Thomas Worsley, 25 July 1834. Q. 7315–7361. (*m*) William Longson, 22 July 1834. Q. 6792–6796.
(*n*) John Duce, 25 July 1834. Q. 7577–7597.

once established; if the weavers were sure they could get their wages raised from the lower to the higher, and get a greater communication from one town to another, there could be no obstacle thrown in the way; it is owing to the masters deluding the weavers, and taking advantage of their poverty, that is the cause of the low wages. The weavers themselves, in every town, could make returns of the highest and lowest rate of wages for the same work, provided the masters felt any hesitation in doing so. The board appointed for that purpose would be as able to get those returns as correctly from the weavers as the manufacturers; that would be a check upon the masters. The Bolton proposition is this, that a maximum rate of wages being once ascertained, should be fixed as the minimum for a certain period; and that at the end of that period, it should be ascertained again what *is* the maximum rate. If such a regulation was adopted by the sanction of Parliament, it would be satisfactory to the hand-loom weavers, generally speaking. When they saw a chance of their wages rising, though slowly, but gradually, they would reconcile themselves to their condition without showing any uneasiness; if their condition was only mended 6*d.* or 1*s.* a week, they would be thankful for it. It is not the wish of the weavers that any very great or sudden change should be made, but that the change should be gradual, so as not to throw any difficulties either in the way of themselves or the masters. Generally, the masters of Manchester are decidedly against it, for this reason, they think that if a weaver got any part in raising the wages or lowering them, they would wish to look at their books and see the profits they gain; and they would not wish them to see anything of the sort; but the plan just now observed upon would not create any necessity to look at the books of the master. If that was known to the manufacturers, they would be more disposed to recommend this regulation; it would be to their advantage, because the more wages they paid, the more profit they would derive from what they put out. With regard to injuring our foreign trade, the price of wages would not be raised by it; it would only compel one master to give the same as another, and if one can afford it another can, because they must go to the same market; and if there was any rise in the market, it would be because there was a greater demand. The great capitalist could afford to do it, when the poorer master could not do it; for instaunce, a man with a great capital, if he had a profit upon that very fabric you are speaking of, he might be content to get 1½*d.* or 2*d.* Having a more extensive sale, and producing more, the sum total of his profits would be very large. The effect would be to throw a great many small capitalists out of the market; but that would be no hurt to the weaver (*o*).

John Lennon, a weaver at Preston, declares, that a minimum rate of wages, by bringing up those bad-paying masters to the price given by the good ones, would immediately benefit the unfortunate weavers who are in debt, and enable them to get such reward for their labour as would materially tend to enable them to free themselves from the state in which they are, and to return to their former independent condition. If the weavers had an advance of a penny a yard, it would gradually grow to the benefit of the masters and the men, for the consumers could pay the difference, provided it did not injure our foreign trade. And if a farmer's wife or a lady goes into a shop to purchase an article, she will not leave behind her an article she fancies for the sake of a penny a yard; and if that was added to the weaver's earnings, we should scarcely look for more, for it would increase itself. I think less than a penny a yard would be of little service, or about 2*s.* a week. It is not the consumers that wish to keep the weavers in that state of distress, if they could bring them out by paying a small additional price for goods; no, they would be delighted at it (*p*).

William Longson, thus explains the operation of a minimum rate of wages on trade, first observing, that it is the want of regulation, the want of proper attention at home, that has caused the prices abroad to be so low, and we have committed the whole evil ourselves. This evil is capable of being corrected by the act of the Legislature; some act of legislation, without embarrassing any individual in this realm, might operate so as to give well-disposed employers the opportunity of raising wages. If there were an act of legislation, declaring that there should be a collection made, or a return made by the manufacturers, I mean the employers, of the prices given periodically, and the highest prices paid by some certain number of the masters should be declared to be the rate of wages that ought to be paid, and to enforce the payment of that rate of wages by any other legal provision that may be deemed necessary to effect the object. I should let it extend to any trade, or to any business in which the masters and the workmen declared it to be an advantage, and if the masters and workmen said it was not applicable, or could not be useful in their trade, then it should not be enforced. I can conceive a commodity made to be consumed here, and the same sort of commodity made to be consumed 50 miles off; it may vary very considerably in price, and a legislative enactment to make all pay alike might raise a good deal of confusion; but they are the best judges themselves. With regard to the cotton goods produced at Manchester, they are to be sold at the furthest corner of the world; and where persons are working for the general market of the world, it cannot produce any inconvenience to anybody. Then in the case of the hand-loom weavers who are now in such deep distress, you should refuse to take any steps, to apply any remedy to their case, provided those who employ them are generally opposed to it. But I cannot conceive that those who employ them are opposed to it, unless it is misunderstood; but I am obliged to say, upon six months' application of the plan, in case the employers said it was an inconvenience to them, I would repeal it again. I have known attempts made repeatedly by masters and weavers to establish a rate of prices which they were willing to pay, and have also known those attempts fail. Although the masters and the weavers could not establish this rate of prices, and enforce its observance by themselves, my reason for thinking that any law which could be made upon the subject would be sufficient to ensure that object is, because I cannot conceive that there would be any opposition to it from any quarter. I can conceive no motive for even attempts to evade the law, with the exception of some. It is not common with those who give employment to hand-loom weavers to say to one, I will give you so much for doing such a piece of work, and to another such a price; but it is generally known, as well as the price of cotton in Liverpool, what any master has given for a certain description of goods; and as it is so general with them, I cannot conceive any desire for evasion. That the attempts made formerly did fail, and that there was an opposition on the part of the manufacturers to observe the lists of prices agreed upon at a meeting held for that purpose, I admit; but there have been sufficient

(*o*) James Brennan, 22 July 1834. Q. 6596–6631. (*p*) John Lennon, 22 July 1834. Q. 6362–6364.

sufficient reasons when there has been a declared rate of wages by the masters of one town or district for their not abiding by it, and some wishing to evade it, and that reason is the want of such an enactment as is now called for or prayed for; because in case it can be observed in a district of 30 miles round, which it never was, go 50 miles off and it is not observed; they are obtaining labour at a much less price, and that labour when brought into the same market with the higher paid labour will be sold for less, from which the inducements or necessities of reductions of wages arise. I do not know that the same disposition that at present exists would remain; there would be a certainty in the uniformity of prices; there would be a knowledge of what the goods could be made for, and what prices they must be sold for; there would be a greater certainty in the outlay of capital in the production of goods, and I cannot conceive that the same motives to reduce wages would continue; and further, knowing that there is such an endless and incalculable competition amongst masters, when the master reduces he does not know that another master is not reducing much lower than he; he may be reducing upon speculation as well as others reducing upon facts. I do not expect that any law can be made to operate in such a degree that there is no possibility of evasion; I do not expect any such thing, but I do expect that a law of that kind would be more effectual than is generally supposed, and that the very enactment would do away with the motive for evasions. On the part of both the masters and weavers I think that would be the case. With regard to the masters, they could not have the same inducement for reduction, to reduce upon speculation, as they have now; reductions are made by some when there is a possibility of others reducing; these reductions are made under the dread of others being before-hand with them in the reduction of wages; the same inducement could not then exist; knowing the price at which they must purchase labour they would know the price at which others would purchase it, as well as that at which they must sell it, though they have no profit upon capital, so that there would be fewer motives for reducing wages on the part of the masters. With regard to the operatives at present, it is not regular for any weaver to go to the warehouse and ask them their prices; he always knows the price before he goes; he generally says, have you any work to put out of such a description? they give him an affirmative or negative answer; he takes it, and it is so well known, there is no doubt about the wages. I think that the weavers themselves would have the good faith not to work for less than the minimum prices, that they would avail themselves of any peaceable mode which they could adopt to prevent the evasion of that law; and I think further, that where there was an evasion of the law, that the weavers themselves would be so conscious of the moral culpability of such an evasion, and indignant, in their own opinions, they might perhaps overcome what might be conceived to be the moral guilt of information; in case that there was such attempts to reduce wages further towards the starving point, I think they would scarcely think there was any moral culpability in giving information against the person that had induced them to do so; and I think further, that that would be the general opinion of mankind. If such an attempt were made by one or more manufacturers, the weavers would immediately, upon getting information of the attempt, expose the manufacturers by making it known publicly. Taking for granted that the construction of the law would be, that no manufacturer should pay below the fixed rate of wages for any article which was contained in the schedule of inquiry, and in the returns made from the different manufacturers, it would be manifest what the lowest wages should be; any manufacturer might give as much more as he pleased, but no one should descend below it without being subject to being called to account, either by a board of arbitration or by penalties. If a minimum were established by law, it would secure much more equality in the rate of wages, as regards the minimum price, than now is observed in the absence of a law. I think that there might be an equalization of prices effected. I very much regret that we cannot do very well without the word minimum, because it is not minimum I mean; it is not minimum that the weavers mean, it is not that they intend; it cannot be effected, and if possible to be effected, I think ought not to be effected; and though I am under the necessity of occasionally using the word minimum, it is not minimum I mean, it is equalization rather. I should take the prices given voluntarily by a number of capitalists or employers; take that price which they voluntarily give, and that price that they voluntarily give would be a general indication from a sufficient number of them. Take the lowest of a certain number of the highest payers, and take the lowest price that some out of that number pay, and fix that the others should give it; some would even pay higher than this price; they might pay a little higher still, and there could be no danger, no risk, no hazard in the world, that I can see, that anybody could be injured by such a demand as this. Suppose there were 25 of them, they might vary 6*d.*, or some proportion, or some fraction; but out of the 25 which have been taken paying a voluntary price, take the lowest, and he that pays the lowest, we could not be wrong in saying all could afford to pay that price, and let that person be obliged, by some legal provision, to pay the price that this lowest payer pays. This I should term equalization; minimum, I must call it, as it is still in use. There have been three propositions made; one that the highest payer should be established as the minimum; another, that there should be an average among the 25 of the highest payers, and then state the lowest. These are matters of detail that do not affect the principle. Suppose the weavers had power to go to the magistrates and request them to call in 12 or 20 masters, to call them together at a meeting, and ascertain from them the prices they voluntarily paid, and then ask them, "Do you say that the state of the trade, foreign and domestic, will afford such a price?" and according to their answer, negative or affirmative, let it be binding upon the others; let them go, and do not call them together too often; and if they can show there is no necessity for calling them together, let the summons be refused. It would be very inconvenient to get a list of every person's prices, and there is no possible necessity for it. If you get out of a large town the rates paid by six, that would be all that is necessary for all the purposes of the inquiry; and if you have more, it would be waste of time in examining them, and without necessity. Any officer residing in the town might ascertain the fact; the weavers themselves would be very much disposed to render him any assistance in that respect, and would be willing to give the information. If six of the highest payers were required, the operatives would give in a statement who paid the highest, as their wages depended upon it; the question might then be put to the masters who paid those wages, and I cannot conceive any difficulty there. As to how often or at what periods you would have those rates of wages ascertained, and the rate of the six highest payers fixed as the minimum, I should say two or three months; and I should further say, if there was a sufficient number of masters, suppose that two masters had found the wages inconvenient, and that they were paying too high, that they should have it in their power to call this meeting, and state the case before them; and if the meeting declare that it is reasonable to reduce the wages, and that they cannot pay higher wages, let them do

do so. I am conscious that those persons who are now paying considerably higher than others, with all the hazards of their competitors before them, in case they have such a security that such a law would give upon the prices they obtain, if they did it voluntarily now, at such a hazard, they can have no hesitation at all; there would be a greater security for them to give better wages, and those who are disposed to give better, there are some that would actually volunteer it; then I do not suppose the cotton manufacturers are worse than any other description of persons; I suppose they are about the average in moral principle of other persons, and I only expect natural causes and natural effects to result from the whole. If such a measure were carried into operation, it would put it in the power of the better disposed to raise the rate of wages above what was fixed, where there was a sufficient number that had fixed the rate above the rate last fixed; when they were voluntarily paying a greater sum, the masters might call a meeting and say, could not the others pay this rate; and say, if it was an increased rate, it would give us a very fair profit. It would be more convenient that some officers should be appointed by the Act of Parliament contemplated, to collect schedules of the prices paid by a large number of manufacturers, say 100 or 200, in the county of Lancaster; and that the authority, whoever it might be, appointed to fix the rate of wages, should have the inspection of those 100 schedules or returns periodically. Supposing the Committee was to recommend a board of trade, and to appoint as an extra clerk some person who had formerly been engaged in trade, and was a person of some respectability, and that they should invest that clerk with authority to go down to Manchester and Glasgow and to Belfast, and to desire the weavers in those districts to request the six highest paying manufacturers to meet him upon such a day, and show him the prices they were in the habit of giving to the weavers; the manufacturers upon such invitation would most readily meet a person so appointed, and show the rate of prices they were then paying; and I think those who voluntarily pay the highest, and give that unquestionable indication of their good principles, would certainly perform the other humane duty of making their declaration, whether personal or written, and if not, even upon the supposition, which I think a flat impossibility, the contrary of that; but taking it hypothetically, the mayor or magistrate of the town could be authorized in such an extreme case, to ascertain from the weavers who were the six highest payers; my opinion is that it would not require more than 15 minutes to get it anywhere. Where this regulation should be introduced and adopted, although it would lead to a rise in the price of weaving, and consequently in the price of the manufactured article, yet I do not think that any rise that would be necessary to place the weaver in a state of comfort would have any effect upon our foreign trade. I cannot conceive that the masters, knowing the state of the trade, foreign and domestic, would oblige themselves and others to give a price that could not be realized in the home and foreign market.

With regard to over-production, I feel some difficulty in giving an answer, because I might give two answers, seemingly opposed and yet with equal truth. That there is an over-production operating against the value of the commodities produced there can be no doubt; they are rendered valueless; and, on the other hand, to limit that production of the objects of human desire I think, in principle, is erroneous. I think too that it is a very great pity that those who produce cloth enough to clothe all the daughters of Eve should themselves be very destitute of clothing. We can clothe many populous nations, but there is not food to be obtained as an equivalent; there is rather an under consumption, from the want of means to consume, than an over-production, or a production beyond what is wanted, provided it was wanted. I do not see any way whereby the means of consumption can be restored, except by giving more wages to the labouring people, who are the greatest mass of consumers. I cannot see by any possibility how consumption can be increased unless the means of consumption are given to the consumers. The difficulties of raising the prices of weaving to the standard they were formerly, or to the standard that they ought to be, in order that those who work may live, are, in my opinion, and indeed I might say with very great comfort, not among the producers and the consumers, but those persons that Dr. Adam Smith calls the higglers of the market.

Suppose that the wages of weavers were raised to 12 *s.* or 14 *s.* a week, which they could easily earn formerly, they would be able to consume more of the clothing they work up for the food that is produced on the soil of England or brought from other countries, and that operation would tend materially to render us less dependant upon foreign trade for a market for manufactured productions. To bring them into the market as consumers, and what they do not lay out upon apparel being laid out in other commodities, would of course increase the purchasing power of the other part of the community, who would expend more money, so that both an increased consumption and an increased power of purchase is given to other members of the community, who would contribute together to make up a great share of the difference, and render us proportionably less dependant upon exportation. All engaged in productive industry, whether in agriculture or manufactures, have a decided interest in doing something to promote better wages among the weavers; and further, if any person would calculate the quantity of apparel that might be consumed by a person, that in case every person was only very moderately clad, there would not be a great deal to export. I have had occasion to make calculations of the kind; I have published them, but can see no contradiction to them.

It is my opinion, that anything calculated to increase production, if at the same time it be accompanied by the means of increasing consumption amongst society generally, is a benefit to that society. If I could produce all the objects of human desire, I would; but at the same time, it should be upon the condition that those whose labour was displaced by that facility or that advantage should have the means of consuming and enjoying what was produced. I do not consider the introduction of the power-looms in itself an evil, if wisely directed; I consider if I could make a machine that would perform every act of human agency or labour, I should conceive myself a benefactor to the human race in case I invented it and put it in circulation; but I leave you to judge whether it would be fair to put it in motion, and leave millions to be starved to death the next week. I would set it to work next week if I could, but I should hold it to be my duty to the Creator and his creatures to make some provision for the means of their preservation (*q*).

In praying for the minimum law, the petitioners have been governed by a cautious wish not to disturb the trade by any violent or any very sudden advance, such as might appear too startling; it has been thought desirable to raise the wages much in the same way as they have dropped, by imperceptible degrees; and if the reductions which have been made from the wages of the weavers within my memory

(*q*) William Longson, 24 July 1834. Q. 7108–7226.

memory had been proposed all at once they would have thrown the population into rebellion, and it is possible, if a very extraordinary rise were to take place in the price of goods, there is a danger that it might give such a shock to the consumer, whether foreign or domestic, as to drive him to some other substitute for a time, and thereby occasion, if not a general evil, a partial inconvenience. If the minimum to be established should only be the maximum rate of wages now paid, that would be altogether inadequate to satisfy the expectations of the hand-loom weavers, or to give them that command of the necessaries of life which I think they are justly entitled to. Supposing, however, that a law were passed fixing that minimum rate, and not going further than that, I do not contemplate that the Legislature would be applied to again upon the subject if they increase it upon the plan I propose, because I would have another inquiry by schedule at the end of six months, and then another inquiry by schedule at the end of another six months, and so on again till wages were raised to such a point as would either enable the manufacturer and weaver both to live, or to such a point as would just barely save us from foreign competition.

The power should be placed somewhere to raise the minimum at the end of six months, and get a new minimum, and at the end of six months again to inquire by schedules then issued whether more could be given, and ascertain if the looms were well employed; such information would decide the question.

It has been contemplated that the rate which should be paid should be a self-determining rate resulting from the best prices which it is known the trade is then bearing, and that the best price which it was known the trade was giving should then be the lowest price; in this way it would not depend either upon the will of one, two or a dozen men what price should be paid, but it would depend on events. An average price would be taken under certain limitations, otherwise it would be in the power of a man who had only one single loom to fix the prices unreasonably high; the average might be easily done by taking a dozen manufacturers' returns where the same qualities of goods are made, among whom you could not suppose a collusion. I would exclude the lowest altogether, and take a dozen of the highest; at the end of six months, fresh schedules of inquiry should be instituted, and if it was found there was a maximum price prevailing above the minimum price which had been fixed at the beginning of the six months, that maximum price should be established as the minimum for the next succeeding six months: there should be a power of raising, but no power of ever falling. There unquestionably would be a time when we should be compelled to stop, and I should be glad to see that time, it would do my heart good; and before ever we would be over done by any country we would come to the public, and pray that we may have the power to go back; we have gone back, for forty years, and now we come and say be pleased to let us advance; we should be as glad to come and ask protection against that rise as we are now in asking for your assistance to rise. It is my opinion that when wages have arrived at such a height that the labouring people could live comfortably, no further measure by way of application for schedules should be resorted to. If the weaver knew that the advance of his wages would be the exclusion of his labour, he would be the first to come forward, for his labour is his living.

There require two things to carry the plan into equitable operation; the one is, the ability to make correct calculations and to verify the returns that might be made, and the power to compel those returns to be made, and that power being granted, I have no doubt but that the thing would be carried into operation under the direction of an enlightened body of manufacturers, or others, under the direction of a practical man. Being a practical manufacturer for many years, and well acquainted with the practices and the abuses of the trade, I have no doubt that with such assistance as I could command, provided I were authorized, I would be able to carry the plan detailed to the Committee into full and complete effect.

There are some manufacturers, men of very great influence in the trade, who I have reason to believe would be exceedingly dissatisfied with any measure of interference whatever. There are others who would be very much gratified with having the thing put upon a permanent basis; amongst the manufacturers who have petitioned for this thing, many of them, I must say, have doubts of the willingness of Parliament to interfere, but are very desirous of having it tried. I think I have represented to the Committee pretty accurately the state of feeling amongst the manufacturers upon the subject. Some of them, who have grown rich some years ago, were advocates for the measure, but since they have become easy in their circumstances are adverse to it; but the great body of the weavers are for it.

The plan which I suggested is simply this, that the power of regulating wages should be put into the hands of those who are favourable to giving good wages and treating their workpeople humanely, and that the power should be taken from those of an opposite character, who have almost invariably been found to practise a very opposite course. That would be the direct tendency of the measure. I have not a doubt but that in the town of Bolton both the clergy and the magistrates, and the gentry and many manufacturers, would be extremely glad if such a proceeding were taken; amongst the clergy, both churchmen and dissenters, there is only one exception in all Bolton.

In respect to our export trade, I should not think any evil consequences would arise from it, for this reason, the British merchant exports very largely, and fixes his own prices, and we have exported at considerably higher prices than we now obtain; and supposing the ability of those countries to remain the same that it was five or ten years ago, we could, in foreign markets, obtain the same prices which we have obtained before (*r*)

A minimum rate should be a sort of turnpike which everybody should pass through in order to go along the road. You might indeed term it a minimum, but it should be a variable minimum; it should vary with circumstances; let it be fixed. A man might pay any weaver as much as he liked, if he did not go below that rate; but it was to be commenced above that which was enough to keep body and soul together. In the same way that no coach is allowed to go along a road without paying a toll, so should no man employ us without paying us a fair and proper price, like the toll for keeping up the materials of the road; such a fair and proper price as persons do voluntarily pay (*s*).

But

(*r*) Mr. John Makin, 17 July 1834. Q. 5151–5165. 5314–5318. 4906.
(*s*) William Longson, 22 July 1834. Q. 6822–6824.

But as matters now stand, a practice prevails, of a man with capital stepping in between the manufacturer and the distributor of goods, and that system operates injuriously. I think so. I have seen in my experience in the trade, manufacturers employing from 800 to 1,000 looms very often disposing of an immense quantity of goods, and immediately afterwards lowering the rate of wages, which has seemed to tell me that they have actually disposed of those goods in such immense quantities, for some particular purpose of obtaining immediately an accession of capital to carry on their trade, but that they endeavoured to make up that deficiency out of the wages of the workmen: and that is another reason why I am so strong an advocate for something of this kind of regulation, which this Committee has under contemplation, because it would prevent the manufacturer taking such a step, and afterwards making good his deficiency at the expense of the workmen (*t*).

The honourable Member for Oldham thus explains the mode of operation for the enactment contemplated, and meets the objections urged against it.

One feature in Mr. Fielden's Bill is, that there should be no general measure, but that inquiries should be directed to certain subdivisions of the country in which the regulations shall operate. The next is, that the officers or authorities to whom it should be delegated to collect those schedules, should collect the names of manufacturers who, by report, are supposed to work up half the goods in that district, that is, half of any one sort or description; so that a manufacturer making two or more sorts of goods may be eligible to be returned for one sort, in the schedule of that sort, but not eligible to be returned in the schedules of the other sorts, owing to his not making a sufficient quantity. Perfect accuracy could not be of course attained in every case, but they should collect the names of those whose hands work up half the material, and from those parties paying different rates of wages the average should be struck, from a majority of one or two in the number returned, selected out of those paying the highest wages. Supposing the number to be 20, it should require 11, and it should be imperative upon all the manufacturers in the different branches to pay not less during the ensuing period of three or six months than that average. To elucidate that, I will suppose a case: I think it has been stated in evidence, that in Spitalfields there are 60 manufacturers; I will suppose 20 of those manufacturers to be making one-half the quantity of goods produced in Spitalfields, and supposing them all at the same time to be the same sort of cloth, the returns in the schedules should be made from those 20 manufacturers who made one-half of the cloth in Spitalfields; when the return is laid before the authority appointed to receive it, he should take 11 out of the 20 of those manufacturers who were paying the highest rate of wages, if there be any difference in the wages paid by any of them; having taken out the prices or the wages of those 11, he should add up the total of the wages paid by each, and divide it by 11, and that would give the average, and the lowest rate of wages to be paid in Spitalfields for that description of work for the next three months, or whatever period might be fixed by the Act; and if there be no difference, nor advance on the lowest wages last directed to be paid, the average and lowest wages will remain as before.

The plan provides for a constant rise of wages, but renders it impossible that wages should ever come down to meet the exigencies of the market; thus, if the average is struck for the lowest rate of wages for the next three months, if any person, during the course of that period, pays higher wages than the minimum established, the next minimum will be higher, and every person who goes on increasing wages will make them higher each quarter. That constitutes its efficiency and its utility. If you allow the manufacturers to reduce the wages, after having been once fixed by any Act of Parliament you may pass, you will apply no remedy whatever to the evil that now exists. The operation will be exactly as is stated in the question, except that any manufacturer must be making a sufficient quantity of goods to bring him into the returns to raise the wages to be directed to be paid by the Act, because on every return required the plan proposed is, that the churchwarden or overseer, &c. shall take the fewest number of manufacturers who, collectively, are reported to make half the cloth produced, or made by the manufacturers putting out work in that township; and they are always, for every sort of cloth, to select such manufacturers who, at the time the returns are required, are making half the cloth of any one description in that district. If those who are making half the cloth return a list of prices that would establish a higher average than that made in the last return, then the prices will rise. If any of those who make half the cloth on any occasion give higher wages than the last minimum, the next succeeding minimum will certainly rise, if those higher wages be continued until the next returns be made, and the manufacturers paying them be eligible to go into the next returns.

Upon this plan no one can reduce the wages below the minimum, and if there should at any period be a reason existing in the minds of the manufacturers that the minimum should be the highest price paid, they will all, unquestionably, descend to that minimum; but whenever a return is called for, there will, in my opinion, be an inequality in wages, but none can then descend below the minimum, therefore the effect must be somewhat of a rise; and it is fair, in my opinion, that those who make half the goods, or 11 out of 20, in the case I have supposed of 20 together making half the goods, that these 11 should fix a price for those goods, a price established by themselves, which they acknowledge from their own practice they can afford to pay; and on that account I do not see that any evil could arise, either to themselves or to any manufacturer competing with them in the market. If that should lead to an abridgment of work, from there being a slack demand, it will be much more satisfactory to the weavers, and more beneficial to their employers, that the quantity produced should be somewhat abridged, than that they should pursue the course they now do, that of ruining the manufacturers and reducing the wages of the weavers. No manufacturer who was manufacturing at the time the schedule was taken, nor no person beginning to manufacture that cloth, could reduce the wages below 5 *s.*, without an infraction of the law. No reduction could take place by any manufacturer, either that three months or the next succeeding three months, so long as this Act continues in force; any manufacturer choosing to manufacture any articles, of which returns had been made, must give no lower wages than had been specified in the returns sent into the township, directing such wages to be paid. The returns are to be made periodically, every three months. No manufacturer could give a lower price than that directed under the authority of this Act, whether 5 *s.* 6 *d.*, 6 *s.*, or whatever it might be. He might, it is true, raise and fall his wages between the times the averages are taken; he could not, however, fall them below the last average; but this plan is

(*t*) William Wallis, 12 July 1834. Q. 4336, 4337.

is accompanied by a power of taking the averages, and in the case supposed, that all the manufacturers are paying 5 *s.* 6 *d.* in one township and 6 *s.* in another, the next average might not be 6 *s.*; it might be a little above 5 *s.* 6 *d.*; it would depend upon the quantity of goods manufactured in these two townships: if the manufacturers at 6 *s.* produced only one-tenth part of the goods, and the manufacturers at 5 *s.* 6 *d.* produced the rest, the 6 *s.* would have very little influence in fixing the wages; nay, none at all, unless some one or more of those paying 6 *s.* were eligible, from the quantity of goods they make, to go into the next returns; and in that case the 6 *s.* has been fixed by the voluntary act of the manufacturers in both townships, who are the best judges of what they can afford to pay.

Supposing this scheme were put into practice, it would not be possible for half a dozen great manufacturers to raise the price in such a manner that they might ruin all the very small manufacturers in that neighbourhood; they take their goods to the same market, and if the larger manufacturer could afford to pay a higher price, or if half a dozen were to unite for that purpose, that would enable the small manufacturer to pay higher wages too, for it cannot be assumed that the larger manufacturer would sell the goods for less than they would cost; the small manufacturer can make as cheap as the large manufacturer: the large manufacturers in general carry on their business through the employment of clerks and servants; the small manufacturers do this work themselves, and therefore they can produce the goods cheaper than the large manufacturers can, if the small manufacturers have the ability to purchase their materials in the best manner. There is nothing proposed in this Act that prevents the small capitalist availing himself of all the advantages he now has, except that of visiting on his weavers a reduction of wages, when a great many manufacturers would be disposed to employ the weavers without lowering wages, but who, dreading and apprehending such a reduction, on that account frequently withhold employment from them. It has been stated in evidence before this Committee, by Mr. Makin of Bolton, that there is now a great demand for weavers; that advertisements were put out by manufacturers wanting 500 or 2,000 weavers, but no one would give more than 5 *s.* 6 *d.*, the price which has been paid for several years; every manufacturer wanting weavers was aware that if he gave an advance upon that price, and for a time the advance became general, yet if he could not sell his goods as fast as they were produced, which might be difficult, he would accumulate a stock; he being thus circumstanced, some manufacturer, perhaps a man of small means, or it may be a manufacturer of large means, for they are as apt to do those things as the man of small means, might reduce the wages again to 5 *s.* 6 *d.* The stock accumulated would be reduced in value thereby; the manufacturer holding it would be compelled to reduce wages too, and hence those wanting weavers are afraid to employ them in making cambrics at any higher wages. Even the smaller manufacturer, who is now in the habit of reducing wages in an unnecessary and cruel manner, would not suffer detriment by such an enactment as this.

Those who profit by the present distress it cannot in any way hurt or interfere with. It is perhaps a delicate question to allude to any parties who may be supposed to do so, but there are many parties who have raised themselves up in consequence of the distress which has been suffered, and the impoverished condition not only of the weavers but also of the manufacturers. The manufacturers, for want of a regulation, have been often led into difficulties, which, had such a regulation existed, they would have escaped. Manufacturers frequently have stocks of goods, and hold them on for a period, in hope of some improvement; improvement does not take place within the time their means will allow them to keep those goods, they are then sacrificed to houses who can furnish them with the needful on the occasion, by being sold for much less than they were produced; a lower price for goods is established in the market, the weavers' wages and their power of consumption are reduced, and both manufacturers and weavers are injured thereby. I really do not see how this plan is likely to diminish the quantity of cotton yarn used; whether the objection may exist in the minds of some cotton-spinners labouring under such apprehension, I am not so clear, but it is my opinion that it will not diminish the demand for cotton yarn.

I and my partners employ upwards of 1,000 hands in spinning and power-loom weaving, and I will state the way in which competition among manufacturers operates in the reduction of the wages of the weavers; I found my opinion on practice and experience. There is one article of manufacture which I and my partners have made for a great number of years; I know the wages paid for that article in 1815 were 4 *s.* 6 *d.*; the consumption of cotton in England was then 6,000 bags a week; in 1824 the consumption of cotton had increased to 12,000 bags a week, and the wages we then paid for weaving that cloth were 2 *s.* 3 *d.* We ceased to make this cloth about 18 months ago, but a great deal of it is made by other manufacturers, who paid the same prices we paid ourselves, and that cloth is now paid for weaving, I think, 1 *s.* 4 ½ *d.*, or may be 1 *s.* 6 *d.*, and the consumption of cotton has increased to 18,000 bags a week; so that as the increase of the manufacture has gone on, the wages of the weavers have been reduced to the same extent in an inverse ratio. I have shown the competition to have been increasing from the amazing increase in the production among those engaged in the cotton manufacture, and I find that this fall of wages does not apply only to that description of cloth, but to almost all descriptions of cloth that are woven in the cotton trade on hand-looms, or very nearly so; on that account I infer, from my own experience, that this downward progress must have been caused by the distress among the manufacturers themselves, this distress urging them on to an increase of production and a diminution of wages; thus exciting active and baneful competition in two opposite directions, namely, increase of production, by which the market is overstocked with goods and their value is reduced; and decrease of wages, by which the weavers are starved; and the result has been excessive and injurious competition between manufacturers, who have tried to undersell each other, and to effect this have made reduction after reduction in the wages of the weaver; and it ought not to be forgotten, as connected with the downward progress of wages arising from this increase of home competition, and accompanied by this increase of production, that the weavers and manufacturers now are in the deplorable state the witnesses have described.

I think the plan I have suggested for the relief of the hand-loom weavers would divert more money into the fund for paying their wages, and abstract it from other uses to which that money is now applied; those who are living on fixed money incomes, and those living in luxury and extravagance, would, if the weavers' wages were to rise, be under the necessity of paying an increased price for manufactured goods, by which they would not suffer, but the weavers would be greatly benefited. Such a result would not be, in the rational sense of the word, injurious or dangerous to the best interests of the manufacturers and all employed, whether in regard to the home or the foreign market, in no way whatever; the security of the property of those living on fixed money incomes requires

that such a system should be adopted to protect it, and those employed in cultivating the soil, by raising the condition of the weavers, would have a better market than they now have, as the weavers would be greater consumers of the produce of the soil, and those engaged in manufacturing fabrics for clothing and other things would also participate in the advantages, by having a better market at home than they now have; it would lessen the surplus there now is for the export trade, and from which export trade, now carried on to excess and frequently a loss, ruin very often follows to those who, without understanding it, are compelled from necessity and want of a market at home to engage in it, and thus place themselves at the mercy of houses who solicit goods on consignment, and, to get them, advance two-thirds or three-fourths of their value, as much, in many instances, and sometimes more, than the goods are afterwards sold for.

In my opinion, the operation of the Act I propose might possibly ensure some rise in wages, which would be voluntarily effected by the manufacturers themselves; and if so, the Act would uphold and maintain such rise in wages, but the advance would be so little at one time, and so gradually accomplished, as not to disturb speedily and rashly the operations of any individual. The assurance the Act would give to the weaver that wages would not be lower, would remove the despondency under which every hand-loom weaver now suffers, and would substitute confidence, hope and expectation in its place, and it might tend to dissolve the unions of other artisans, who would rejoice to see one class, at least, had secured protection which, if requisite, might be extended to them; and to the extent weavers' wages may, by the voluntary acts of the manufacturers, be advanced, the weaver would be better able to maintain himself, and consequently less dependent on parochial relief or on charity for the means of subsistence, which would raise him in the scale of society. The Act would give to those manufacturers disposed to pay as good wages as they could the power of regulating wages, and take that power out of the hands of those who might be otherwise disposed: and no manufacturer inclined to deal fairly by his weavers, and conduct his business in an honest manner, however small his means, could suffer by such a mode of regulation. The Act would give confidence to manufacturers, and secure more certain and constant employment to the weavers, when the supply of goods might somewhat exceed the demand, because of the full assurance the manufacturers would have that any stock of goods they might accumulate on such occasions would not be reduced in value by any reductions in wages; and if, on any such occasions, and from their long continuance, work should become scarce, and the quantity given out be somewhat limited, such a limitation of work would be much more satisfactory to the weavers, and more advantageous to the manufacturers, than the continuance of the present practice of reducing wages in order to force an artificial demand, the pernicious tendency of which cannot be too strongly deprecated; this practice induces injurious speculation, and causes goods to be sold for less than they ever can be made for, which goods are again brought into the market when prices rise a little, and prevents the manufacturer and his weaver from getting into a healthy state again longer than they otherwise would be; it promotes consignments of goods on advances of money made by agents soliciting such consignments, which goods are often sent to markets where few are wanted, and are sold at considerable sacrifices to cover the advances made on them; it enables houses, aptly designated "slaughter-houses," to possess themselves of large quantities of goods at prices much below their cost; and hence, from these operations follow in train the insolvency of manufacturers, the starvation of their weavers, and all the demoralizing consequences which deface, injure and impair the beauty of a well-regulated society; converts men, rich and poor, into demons, and prepares them for deeds the most desperate. The Act, to the extent it might raise wages, would increase the consumption of the produce of the soil and of the loom; hence all engaged in producing these things, and in the distribution of them, would derive material advantage from raising up the condition of that useful, peaceable, and numerous class, the hand-loom weavers; and no interests could suffer by it, which ought not to be made give way to secure it. The increased consumption of manufactures at home, and the better adjustment of the supply to the demand, would diminish the supply for export, and improve in quality the export trade; the rise in wages here would probably be followed by a correspondent rise in wages in foreign countries, where manufactures are produced; this rise in wages abroad would increase the consumption there, and the fiend, foreign competition, everlastingly harped upon in discussing this question, would be innoxious and harmless (*u*).

The measure recommended by Mr. Fielden is not a new enactment; it was before partially in operation at Spitalfields, and has long been prayed for by the weavers and their employers.

Richard Needham states, that the first application to Parliament was made for a regulation of wages upon the principle of the Spitalfields Act by the weavers; the Silk Weavers' Act was a mutual rate between the employer and the employed, which the magistrates rendered fixed, and could not rise or fall; at that time Mr. Pitt was Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer as well; I was not here, but another person was here at the time we were applying for it. Mr. Pitt stopped Colonel Stanley from moving any further in the business; he sent to the weavers' solicitor, and sent him down to hold a delegate meeting, to consult the weavers as to the plan he had to suggest, which was a principle of arbitration, and if we would give up the application for a regulation of wages at that time, he would give us that in lieu of it. His mission was successful; the Arbitration Act, for settling disputes between master and workman in a cheap and summary way, was carried into execution to a very great extent in our part of the country, and thousands and thousands of pounds have been recovered under it, because the magistrates of our division were always friendly to protect the working classes, and it has been executed there to an extent that it has not in any other place; the Act, however, was found defective, not in the principle, but in some of the details; we applied for an amendment of the Act in 1803; I came up at that time, and the Scotch people came up too; the Act was amended at that time, and the defects of it were made good. In 1805, the master manufacturers, some of the most wealthy in Bolton, applied to me and others to desire the weavers to call a meeting, and choose a committee, and they would go with us to Parliament to get a regulatory law on the principle of the Spitalfields Act; we were glad of it, and we did do so; those gentlemen met us, and a joint committee was appointed; we applied to Parliament in 1806, but a dissolution of Parliament took place in consequence of a disagreement between His Majesty and his Ministers. At that time the present Earl Grey was Secretary of State for the Home Department, and he would not suffer

(*u*) John Fielden, Esq. M. P., 30 July 1834. Q. 8015-8072.

suffer us to go into the question till we had had an interview with the Board of Trade. We had an interview with them, and they opposed us; but a dissolution took place, and Mr. Rose was President of the Board of Trade at that time. There was a petition signed by 130,000 cotton weavers; it was all one petition from the counties of Lancaster, Chester, York and Derby; there was a general petition signed by 101 master manufacturers, and most of those very wealthy; some of them kept a thousand hands. They petitioned Parliament along with us; they sent up six delegates, from Manchester, from Chorley, from Preston, and from Bolton and Stockport; there was a meeting of merchants formed in London, and the leaders of that meeting were Messrs. Helps, Lewis & Ray, the two Goldschmidts, brothers, Messrs. Rowland & Burrs; in fact the whole of the merchants of Cheapside were on the committee and joined with us, and they subscribed money to support the application. It was brought forward at that time, and lost; but I should state that Mr. Rose communicated to me, when I arrived in London, that the Privy Council had had a meeting, and that the Ministers had agreed to give us an Act for three years, on condition we would submit to that; a meeting of the merchants of London took place at Mr. Ainsworth's, Cheapside, and they were ready to receive it; however, the following morning I was to have the ultimatum of Government, and then they would only give it for one year, and the merchants would not consent to take it upon that principle. The law was for fixing the lowest rate of wages. There was a committee appointed at that time; they merely reported the evidence, but gave no opinion whatever. I have here a plan of doing it, which is the plan that was agreed upon. [*Delivering in a paper.*]

PRICES of WEAVING, 1st June 1808.

REED. Bolton Count.	No. of Ends in one Inch.	No. of Picks in one Inch.	6-4ths Common Cambrics.						9-8ths Common Cambrics, Price per Cut of 24 Yards.	
			No. of Scores of Hanks in one Piece of 24 Yards.	Price per Score for Weaving.	Price per Cut of 24 Yards, 1st payment beginning June 1st.	Price per Score of Hks. to be paid August 1st, 1808.	Price per Cut of 24 Yards, to be paid on the 1st of August 1808.	First Payment commenced June 1st, 1808.	Second Payment commences Aug. 1st, 1808.
From				s. d.	£. s. d.	s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
18 to 40	30 to 68	100	8.1	1 3½	– 10 4½	1 5	– 11 4	– 7 9½	– 8 6
44	68 72	105	8.9	1 3¾	– 11 1½	1 5½	– 12 3	– 8 4¼	– 9 2¼
46	72 76	110	8.17	1 4	– 11 9½	1 6	– 13 3	– 8 10¼	– 9 11½
48	76 80	115	9.5	1 4½	– 12 8½	1 6½	– 14 3	– 9 6½	– 10 8¼
50	80 84	120	9.13	1 5	– 13 7	1 7	– 15 3	– 10 2¼	– 11 5¼
52	84 88	120	9.13	1 6	– 14 5½	1 8	– 16 1	– 10 10¼	– 12 –¾
54	88 92	123	9.18	1 7	– 15 7	1 9	– 17 2½	– 11 8¼	– 12 11
56	92 96	126	10.3	1 8	– 16 11	1 10	– 18 7	– 12 8¼	– 13 11¼
58 to 60	96 100	130	10.9	1 9	– 18 3	1 11	1 – –½	– 13 8¼	– 15 –
62	100 104	135	10.17	1 10	– 19 10½	2 –	1 1 8	– 14 11¼	– 16 3
64	104 108	140	11.5	1 11	1 1 6½	2 1	1 3 5	– 16 2	– 17 5¾
66	108 112	150	12.1	2 –	1 4 1	2 2	1 6 1	– 18 –¾	– 19 6¾
68 to 70	112 116	160	12.17	2 1	1 6 9¼	2 3½	1 9 4½	1 – 1	1 2 –½
72	116 120	165	13.5	2 2	1 8 8½	2 5	1 12 –	1 1 6½	1 4 –
74	120 124	170	13.13	2 3½	1 11 3	2 6½	1 14 8¼	1 3 5¼	1 6 –¼
76	124 128	175	14.1	2 5	1 13 11½	2 8	1 17 5½	1 5 6¼	1 8 1¼
78 to 80	128 132	180	14.9	2 7	1 17 4	2 10	2 – 11½	1 8 –	1 10 9
82	132 136	184	14.6	2 9	2 – 7¾	3 –	2 4 4½	1 10 5¾	1 13 3½
84	136 140	188	15.2	2 11	2 4 –½	3 2	2 7 9½	1 13 –½	1 15 10¼
86	140 144	192	15.9	3 1	2 7 6¾	3 4	2 10 6	1 15 8¼	1 17 10½
88	144 148	196	15.15	3 3	2 11 2	3 6	2 15 1½	1 18 4½	2 1 4¼
90	148 152	200	16.1	3 5	2 14 10	3 8	2 18 8	2 1 1½	2 4 –
92 to 94	152 156	205	16.9	3 7	2 18 11½	3 10	3 3 –¼	2 4 3½	2 7 3¼
96	156 160	210	16.17	3 9	3 3 2¼	4 –	3 7 4½	2 7 4¾	2 10 6½
98	160 164	215	17.5	3 11	3 7 6½	4 2	3 11 10½	2 10 8	2 13 11
100	164 168	220	17.14	4 1	3 12 3	4 4	3 16 8	2 14 2¼	2 17 6

On the attempt to pass the Minimum Bill in 1808, Mr. Rose, the then Vice-President of the Board of Trade, attended the whole of the investigation, and we saw him every day during the time; his opinion was, that as the master and men had jointly come to Parliament together, that it was the bounden duty of Parliament or the Government to give them their sanction and support; but for his part, he said, he was not friendly to the minimum; he was decidedly for a maximum; for if the minimum was fixed, all the masters would always contrive to keep it low; but the maximum was the thing that would work. Before the Spitalfields Act passed into a law, and it had then been in

existence 50 years before, he stated that there had been nothing but bankruptcies among the masters and distress among the workmen, and they applied to Parliament to fix the rate of wages. Parliament refused; and the consequence was riot and insurrection; the churches were converted into barracks, and the journeymen were cutting and destroying the webs and mountings. There were several lost their lives for violating the offended laws of the country; and at last Parliament agreed to take the subject into consideration, and they ultimately passed the Bill into law; and since it has been passed into a law, the masters have grown immensely rich; it had destroyed that monstrous competition, and the workpeople had become happy and contented; that there had not one person there been convicted for treason or sedition during the last 50 years; that they paid less poor-rates in the district than in any district within the Bills of Mortality, and their conduct had been so very meritorious that he had even mentioned it to the King; that as the masters had agreed jointly to come up to ask for a minimum, he would assist them; but he gave a preference to the fixed rate of wages, that they were never to go above it or below it. After that, Mr. Rose went out of office. I saw a letter he sent to the secretary of the Spitalfields committee, accompanying a note for 200 *l.*, to give to the poorest people in that district, and advising them, if any person ever attempted to repeal the law, to let him know, and he would come by return of post from any part of the world he was in, for it was the best Act that the House of Commons ever passed. The Act was not repealed during his life; but, after his death, the political economists came into power again: he was the last of the old school. I had occasion to call upon the Earl of Lauderdale, and we discussed it over; he was the person that moved for the repeal of that law; and the persons that applied to him to do it, came to him to beg him to withdraw it after it had been read a second time; he said it was so inconsistent he could not do it. I told him what would be the consequence. Since that Act was repealed, wages have been reduced a half, and the poor-rates have doubled (*x*).

According to *J. Ballance*, Esq., the principle of the Spitalfields Act secured for the time being an uniformity of price, and prevented one manufacturer paying less than another. If I pay 7 *d.* by the provisions of that Act, my neighbour cannot pay 6 *d.* till we all agree that 6 *d.* is the price; I call that the principle of the Act. I consider the principle very beneficial, as it prevents the fluctuations of prices, and prevents the cupidity of selfish men from taking every advantage of the temporary depressions of trade to reduce the price of wages; for, undoubtedly, it is also beneficial for the manufacturer that the prices should be steady, and, unquestionably, losses are prevented from arising to the manufacturer from the fall of stock. When the price of labour falls to that extent, the value of his stock must be depreciated. I consider it injurious to both masters and workmen that the system which now prevails should be carried on as it now is. It is my fixed opinion that we all ought to pay the same price (*y*).

William Hale, Esq., for many years a silk manufacturer in Spitalfields, and above 20 years treasurer of the poor-rates, denies that while the Spitalfields Act was in force the Spitalfields manufacture gradually departed from London, and took up its station in Manchester and Macclesfield; on the contrary, he says, we always had full employment in Spitalfields. I am aware, in the time of the Spitalfields Act, some locality might induce some persons to make goods in the country; it might have that tendency; still we were always employed in Spitalfields; there was full employment in Spitalfields when the Act was repealed, and I believe as many were employed the year or two or three years before, and till the time it was repealed, as there have been since.

There were two or three periods when the silk weavers were in great distress; but I look upon it the Spitalfields Act at the time saved us from much greater distress than if it had not been in existence. The distress arose from the want of sale for goods; now if the Spitalfields Act had not been in operation, the consequence would have been, that some persons, under the idea of half a loaf being better than none, would have endeavoured to lower the price of weaving, and have got a number of hands to work at a lower price; the consequence would have been an over-production; but, being obliged to pay nearly about the same price, there was not that disposition; it could not be put in force, the people could not have recourse to that; consequently, the moment trade resumed, the stocks were not so very great, and the hands were employed directly. While the distress existed, the manufacturers came to the resolution of putting the people on half-work, not to lower the price, and the consequence was, in about six months the thing came round again. I think it was in the year 1792, it was the longest period; but had there been no Act at that time, such quantities of goods might have been made for half-price, and the wages being sunk more and more, they would have accumulated so that we should not have got back to a wholesome state of trade; still we always found that the best remedy was not to sink the price of labour, and by those means increase the difficulty of a superabundance of stock; but to send less work out, and give the same price for making.

By establishing, throughout the whole country, a minimum of wages, so as to make the people better off, the extension of sale, which has arisen in consequence of lowering the wages, would not, I think, be stopped. The price of wages forms but a small part of the article; and in proportion as better wages are paid, there is more money circulated, and that increases the power of purchase amongst the lower class themselves; every class of the people is bettered by a greater quantity of money being circulated, and I think there would be as many goods sold; and the increase of price being accompanied by a proportionate increase in the quantity of money circulated, I think the home consumption would be the same as before. With the foreign consumption, when prices were raised here, it would make very little difference. Take an article worth 3 *s.*, it will be perhaps but 3 *d.*; it might lessen it to that degree, but not more. My idea is, that it costs the country as much to make an article, if you pay but part of it in wages and part in poor-rates, though by this system of reducing wages you make the poor people become paupers, you deteriorate their morals, and bring them into discontent with the Government (*z*).

William Wallis, a hand-loom silk weaver in Spitalfields, says, I am of opinion that both the manufacturers and the workmen have been injured and reduced in their circumstances by adopting this mode of reducing wages. I am induced to be of that opinion, from the knowledge I have of the working

(*x*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5389-5403. 5633, 5634.
(*y*) J. Ballance, Esq., 16 June 1834. Q. 107–110.
(*z*) William Hale, Esq., 12 July 1834. 4117–4119. 4130–4133.

working of the original system of protection, because, under the influence of the Spitalfields Act, the prices being fixed, first by the masters and the men, and afterwards ratified by advertisements signed by the magistrates of the district, no master could pay other than the same price that his neighbour paid. The natural consequence was, that whenever a cessation took place in the demand for goods, they regulated the quantity immediately, by slacking the quantity of work brought in. They would either turn a certain number of their hands off, or keep them standing still, in order to slacken the quantity in making; but that is not the case now.

When the Spitalfields Act was in operation, I never heard any complaints by either party. The fact, I think, speaks for itself, that to the manufacturer, with regard to wages, it is a matter of indifference, except for the selfish principle of over-reaching his neighbour in the market by a reduction, because if he acts upon fair principles, whatever he pays for the amount of wages he places upon the article in its production, and he reaps the advantage in a fair market, under all circumstances, of a per-centage upon that portion of his capital which is laid out in wages, as well as that portion laid out in material. The attempt of one manufacturer to over-reach his brother manufacturers has, generally speaking, failed in securing that benefit to the manufacturer which he aimed at by adopting that course. A disposition in one manufacturer to compete with another I do not remember ever showing itself till after 1825, when the Spitalfields Act was repealed.

I believe, at the suggestion principally of some of the large manufacturers, the Legislature, contemplating, I think, the opening of the trade in silk goods with France, felt that any restriction of prices at Spitalfields would be injurious to the trade, and would have a tendency to drive the trade away from London into the country; but there had been, some two or three years previous to that, an attempt to get the principle of the Spitalfields Act adopted in the country, by Mr. Peter Moore, the Member for Coventry. I think that the repeal of the Act has been injurious to the Spitalfields weavers, decidedly so, both to masters and workmen; because the wages are now only about half what they were before the repeal of that Act; and not only that, but because no man, and no master, in fact, knows what wages the one shall receive and the other shall pay a month before the time; and there is no stability on the part of the master, nor is there any stability on the part of the weaver, because he does not know how to manage his family affairs with any degree of certainty. The Spitalfields weavers petitioned against the repeal of that Act most strenuously; so strenuously, that they obtained a Committee in the House of Lords, and succeeded in getting the Bill for the repeal of the Act thrown out; but it was brought forward again the year following, by Lord Lauderdale, in the House of Lords, and finally repealed. A great majority of manufacturers joined the petitions against the repeal of that Act, while not one-fourth of the manufacturers wished its abrogation. The Act was repealed, not because it worked disadvantageously either to the manufacturers or the workmen, but for some other reason; and it has always struck me that there was one principle in that Act which appeared to be obnoxious; and perhaps if the masters and men had seen their own interests well enough to have asked one another a few questions upon the subject, and had agreed to an alteration of the Act, it would not have led to a repeal. One of the principles of the Act was to prevent the London manufacturer carrying on his business in any other county in the kingdom; and that, I believe, operated very obnoxiously in the minds of some of the large manufacturers, with regard to the expansion of their capital; and I believe that led to the repeal: but I think that an adjustment between the two parties might have taken place, and god rid of that difficulty.

There is nothing, I think, that has been so misunderstood and misrepresented as the spirit of the Spitalfields Act. The whole working of that Act was simply this, that whenever any new work came out, or was invented, of which the price was not known, the master engaging the workmen on that work, and the men themselves, came to an understanding of what was the value of the labour upon the work; and if the work took so as to become a general article of demand, which mostly was the case, to any great extent, then a committee of the journeymen, appointed by themselves, and a committee of the masters, also appointed by themselves, undertook to regulate and fix the regular price for that work; but that regulation was not legal unless carried to the sessions, and sanctioned by the magistrates at quarter sessions, both in the city of London and the county of Middlesex, and in the Tower Royal, and then advertised three times in the leading journals of the day, then it became the law, and was imperative upon every manufacturer afterwards making that work, and every weaver taking it out to make, that they should pay and receive the same price all through the trade: and I believe that nothing can be more fair between the two parties than that, nor more simple in its operation. It comes, as near as possible, to Mr. Hale's plan, only that Mr. Hale's plan is rather shorter, inasmuch as he only asked for a law to make it binding when the two parties have had public meetings assembled; and the other plan was to have the authority of the magistrates.

Previously to going before the magistrates, the manufacturers and weavers always met. The magistrates never had anything to do with the regulating or saying what should be the price. The price was brought before them by the masters and weavers, and therefore if any argument grew out of the subject before the magistrates, the only question for them to decide was, whether, according to the arguments used upon the one side and upon the other, they thought that price so argued was fair upon the one side and the other, and to decide upon that side that they thought the fairest, just as they decide in the Old Bailey, or any other court, as to the propriety of finding a person guilty or not guilty. There were lists of prices taken sometimes to the magistrates, and both parties heard upon the subject, to state their objections and their reasons for and against such a price, when there was any disposition on the part of the masters to contend; but in most cases they went amicably together, and merely laid the prices before the magistrates for their ratification, agreeably to the Act of Parliament. The manufacturers and the weavers invariably met to decide upon the list of prices when an alteration took place. When a list of prices was concluded, committees were appointed by them, and the prices were settled by the two committees, consisting of weavers and masters, which was afterwards handed to the magistrates. I never remember but one instance, and that was towards the latter end of the existence of the Spitalfields Act, in fact, I believe it was between the two periods when the Act was first attempted to be repealed and the bringing in the Bill a second time, that an application was made to the magistrates by one part of the trade to get an altered list of prices passed the sessions. Some of the journeymen as well as some of the manufacturers opposed it, and the magistrates finally rejected it altogether, and it was not acted upon.

I think nothing would be so satisfactory as some sort of law, that would have for its effect the making the same rate of wages upon any given article paid by one set of masters to be paid by all throughout the trade; that is to say, that if the article of gros de Naples was agreed to by both parties

ties to be worth 6 *d.* a yard making by the weaver, that that should be the minimum, and no master should be allowed to go below it; and I think that if a law to that effect was in existence, it would have, in a very short time, a very desirable effect upon the condition of the working people. In the first instance, there are only two parties that ought to be recognised in the settlement of wages, and that is the employers and the employed; and whenever a respectable part of the masters think that such a price is a fair price, and the journeymen acquiesce in it, there should be some authority authorized by the Legislature to carry that into effect and make it binding. The question of penalties, I think, is a very delicate subject; but there must be some sort of security given for the fulfilment of the contract. I think there should be a penalty for going below the minimum that should be so fixed; and of course it would be left to the judgment of the Legislature to say the amount.

With respect to the connexion of the silk trade with the foreign trade, I should think that the good sense of the trade, both masters and workmen, would see the necessity of the one party giving such a rate of wages, and the other party receiving it, as would not interfere with the foreign competition under existing circumstances. But with regard to smuggling, I cannot help thinking that a plan might be adopted by Government, and I think the Government is bound to secure the trade against the competition of the foreigners, through the smugglers. They have undertaken to try the experiment by the introduction of foreign goods; they have said, you deserve a certain protection, which protection they have fixed; and then why not go a step further to secure the revenue and the trade against the evils arising from smuggling; they have the means in their power, and ought, in justice to the trade and to the public, to carry it into full effect. I know that there have been certain propositions made, that I think would be effective; there have been plans laid before the Board of Trade that would be effective, and would preserve us from it; but why those measures have not been taken into consideration I do not know.

It is my opinion that the wages of the Spitalfields weavers might be raised to a price whereby they might maintain themselves, without any injury being inflicted, by lessening the quantity of foreign trade, or by putting a stop to the introduction of foreign manufactures, by such regulations as Government might adopt. I think that the present condition of the weaver might be advanced, because I can see no reason why, with a protection fairly guaranteed to the trade by the Government of 30 per cent., the reductions in wages should be 60, and from that to 90; I think, therefore, the weaver would be benefited to the extent of the difference between 30 and 60 or 90 (*a*).

The Manchester manufacturers of calico, in April 1826, brought forward a plan somewhat similar to Mr. Fielden's proposed Bill, and which provided for a minimum rate of prices.

The opposition to the measure, in the evidence adduced, is principally developed in leading questions to the witnesses, and answered negatively or affirmatively; but one gentleman, *Robert Gardner*, Esq., while admitting that those parties who are best able to employ the weavers are the parties most averse to the reduction of wages, and they are forced to reduce wages in consequence of the reduction made by the smaller capitalists, that are less able to reduce, says, Yet, speaking for myself, I am very much averse to fettering trade at all, or interfering; because the supply and demand will always regulate wages. Some time ago, perhaps 10 or 15 years ago, we had a great deal of disturbance in Lancashire, principally among the weavers, and there were several meetings; and at that time I was very anxious we should have had a committee of masters to regulate wages; and my only reason (and I stated it to several) for not pursuing it was, I thought it would do mischief, because they would fix them so high as to injure the demand; because no manufacturer of any respectability, if the power lay in his hands, would ever think of fixing the wages at such a price that the weaver could not live well. And I have thought myself that it is necessary for the existence of our trade that wages should not be high. I find that in most parts of Germany they can lay down yarn at an expense of 2 ½ *d.* per pound; and in any part of Switzerland, and the more distant parts of Germany and Saxony, it can be laid down at 3 *d.* per pound on the Manchester price; that includes the commission for purchasing, packing, carriage, freight, insurance, and carriage on the other side; and hitherto the whole of the yarn has been reeled from the cop, put into hanks and bundled, and packed in bales: it was a more expensive process to reel it back again than off the cop; but lately they have began purchasing the warps in a state actually prepared to go into the loom, and they are purchasing also pin-cops, ready to fit into the shuttle.

Mr. *Gardner* continues: Under no circumstances should I be friendly to the regulating of wages: and under the present circumstances, when we are pressed so much with foreign competition, for we ourselves, as an individual house, are supplanted in the Dutch market, in the Belgium market, in the German market for several articles of our manufactory, and also in the American market, with coloured goods, to a considerable extent; and when, as I stated before, yarn can be laid down in the foreign market at from 2 ½ *d.* to 3 *d.* on the Manchester price, and a labourer can support his family for one-third or one quarter of what he can do in this country, I think that is sufficient to show us the great competition; and then power-looms, you are well aware, are encroaching very much indeed, except they were to lay a tax on power-looms.

With respect to the comforts of the weavers, my decided opinion is, that wages cannot advance, and therefore I think he is the weaver's friend who would lead the weaver to get any other employment. I asked the question, why is there at least 25 per cent. of looms standing in Bolton, and only 10 per cent. in different parts? my manager replies, because there is a greater variety of other work at Bolton; for instance, he named two or three of our own weavers, one had got employment at Mr. Hicks's new foundry; and that two or three children, that were weaving for us, were also going to other employments, perhaps in a machine establishment; and that is the way he accounted for a greater proportion of looms standing in Bolton than in country districts, where there is a less variety of other employments. Those who worked these looms have got other employment; formerly a great many of the looms were worked by journeymen, and there is hardly such a thing as a journeyman to be found anywhere now, because those men, instead of going into a poor man's house and working on his looms, go into a power-loom mill, where they have more comfort, and perhaps earn 3 *s.* or 4 *s.* a week more.

The

(*a*) William Wallis, 12 July 1834. Q. 4302–4332.

The objections of Mr. *Gardner* are thus further urged, and combatted by his own admissions. It would be pleasing to those that pay high wages to have the others brought up; but at the same time I understand the Act to have the power to advance, but not to reduce. I do not understand the Act to embody any board of masters or any other, to reduce the wages; but it has one tendency; as, for instance, it is given in evidence here that 5*s.* 6*d.* is the price paid for a certain description of cloth; at that time we were paying 6*s.* 6*d.*, we are now paying 6*s.* 9*d.*; Horrocks, Jackson & Co., of Preston, and a more honourable house we have not in the country, are paying 6*s.* 6*d.*, and of course, put those three together, 5*s.* 6*d.*, 6*s.* 6*d.*, and 6*s.* 9*d.*, it would raise the average: very well then, if those people at 5*s.* 6*d.* were brought up to 6*s.* 6*d.*, the weavers would say, "No, you must still keep your station; you were paying 1*s.* 3*d.* above so and so, and you must go so much higher, or else we cannot weave for you, for those paying 5*s.* 6*d.* are less particular about the cloth; they are not so nice whether there are the exact picks in or not;" therefore the tendency would be to raise not 2*d.* but 6*d.* every time. A rise would be thus effected, with the concurrence of the masters paying the best wages, I admit; but it would, in my decided opinion, act very injuriously both to the manufacturer and to the country at large. I object to the principle on account of the foreign competition; not less than a dozen individuals have come from Holland, from Belgium and from Germany, this year, that have been in the habit of buying of us regularly certain descriptions of goods; this spring, they said, "We cannot now buy so and so, the Swiss people cut you out; we cannot buy so and so, the Saxon cuts you out; and therefore I adduce these reasons to show that an advance of wages would drive away that portion of manufacture that is still left. Even supposing the higher paying masters had the power to alter that minimum, I would have the same objection to the Act; because respectable masters would always be governed and influenced by what weavers could live upon, and they must, of course, as men of common feeling, raise the wages considerably, and would, I have no doubt. If this thing had been in operation, perhaps 20 years ago, I think it might have been beneficial to the country, because it would have prevented wages going down so low as what they have done; and I am of opinion, that if wages had never gone so low as they have been, the protecting duties of foreign countries would never have been so high; that is my decided opinion. The countries to which I refer, when speaking of the protecting duties, are the Americans, Germans and different foreign countries. I am alluding now to 20 or 25 years ago. My objection to this system is because of the foreign competition on the one hand, and the great increase of power-looms on the other.

The effect of this regulation, of placing that power in the higher paying masters, instead of the lower, would be merely a transfer of power; the lower paying master has the power now, and exercises the power without an Act of Parliament: supposing the minimum not unalterable, this regulation places the power in better hands than where the power will exist, whether Parliament interferes or not. I admit this; but that power would, in my opinion, be exercised to the prejudice of the country. Men would be influenced, as I said before, in fixing the wages, considering what a man could support his family for; and it would raise it so high, that it would at once cut off that branch of our foreign business with Europe. At this time, I beg to state distinctly, the hand-loom manufacturers are in a very bad situation; most of them have very heavy stocks, and most of them at this time are curtailing manufacture, in consequence of not being enabled to make sales; and I have no doubt, in the course of a very short time, there will be a general reduction of wages, in consequence, of the hand-loom weavers, partly from foreign competition and partly from the power-loom. When you take into consideration the very great demand there is for yarn at the present time, yarn is absolutely scarce in our market, and the whole of the parties that are supplying the manufacture trade, they say it is quite anomalous; we find that our friends in the manufacturing interest are not buying at all, and yet yarn is absolutely scarce; what is the cause? Now, if you take into consideration the export of yarn, (I am speaking of the export,) that while there is a very great export demand, the yarn is absolutely scarce; the manufacturers are doing comparatively very little, and I think my opinion will be backed, in the course of a month or two months; we shall see a general reduction of wages, in my opinion. I do, therefore, decidedly entertain this opinion, that if the controlling power of regulating wages was placed with the high paying masters, that the trade in manufactures is such, that such a regulation and the placing of power in such hands would be injurious to the country. It would work injuriously, as it would tend to the great and more rapid increase of power-looms. There is such a spirit of enterprize, and such great improvements taking place in power-looms, that I have no doubt of their capabilities, to say the least of it, to weave one-half of the different fabrics that are now woven by hand; and they not only make them cheaper, but better than what they can be made at the present wages. The next is the foreign competition. This great and increased export of yarn that every year takes place; they must do something with it; they must make it into cloth, and I have given you instances of competition. The Americans are going very extensively into the French market for their coloured goods; the dye is cheaper, and the yarn is coming so much near the price of ours, that they are buying very extensively, both in France and in Saxony, such goods as they used to buy altogether in this country. It would work injuriously, because I assume it would raise wages. My reasons for that assumption are, that those who are now paying the higher wages, being pressed on by those who are paying the lower wages being brought up to them, would advance; and this advance that would take place in the wages of the weaver would operate injuriously to the country, though if we had no foreign competition, it would work beneficially. I wish clearly to be understood; I am not opposing an advance of wages on the principle of opposing it; but I say we are so much pressed by power-loom and by foreign competition, that one-half of those weavers that are now employed must be dispersed, and find other employment within seven years from this time. An advance, we will say, for instance, from 6*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* by the high paying master, would be injurious; because every advance would tend to give our competitors power over us, and every advance of wages would tend to the great increase of power-looms. The controlling power being then placed in the hands of the higher paying master, they would advance to the injury of themselves, and have competitors in the trade. I assume it as a matter of course; because, why do I pay 6*s.* 9*d.* now for what another man pays 5*s.* 6*d.*? do you suppose it is out of love to the weavers I pay that 1*s.* 3*d.*? Nothing of the sort; it is because I am more particular in the quality of my cloth. I do not say that we are paying decidedly a higher wage; I say that we are more particular in our cloth, and therefore it merits higher wages, and on that account I assume that I must still progress, and therefore every average, instead of rising 2*d.*, will rise at least 6*d.* No doubt, however, that the effect would be this: the manufacturer who is now paying 5*s.* 6*d.*, when he was

PART III. Remedies. Sect. 1. Minimum of Wages.

brought up to our standard, would be as particular as we are, and endeavour to get as good goods made as we do; I dare say he would be more particular; no question about it: and that would bring back a greater uniformity in the rate of wages than now prevails. After this greater uniformity was established, I assume that no man would raise his wages, except from interested motives or compulsion; I am quite satisfied about that; but if a man will keep up his character for superiority of cloth, he must pay a higher price than the mass. That, however, would tend to correct an evil which now prevails among the weavers themselves; it would make them more careful in the work which they executed, in order that they might be employed at a better price. I think it would improve the quality; and if the quality were improved, it would give an advantage both in the home market and in the foreign market. It would be advantageous, but at the same time I think that hand-loom cloth would never be equal to that of power (*b*).

Section II.—*Boards of Trade.*

Sect. 2. Boards of Trade.

THE measure of relief suggested under this head approximates closely to that of the foregoing section; the object of both being the same, namely, raising the rate of wages; the difference consisting rather in the detail than in the principle; many therefore of the arguments adduced in the preceding section bear on the establishment of boards of trade, while several of the observations relating to the latter are equally applicable to fixing a minimum of prices; as it may, however, tend to a further elucidation of this important question, the following is the result of my analysis as far as the brevity necessary to the case will permit.

To ascertain the minimum rate of wages, Parliament should order the Board of Trade to get such information as the schedules proposed would afford, and after having done so, to fix a minimum rate of wages, with which all manufacturers should be compelled to comply. I do not think that the manufacturers would consent to co-operate together without having the sanction of a law, for it has been tried over and over again. The concern in which I learned my business agreed for a certain period to pay an advance of wages along with others; and I find, on comparing our wages with the wages paid by others at that time, that we were paying 8*s.* for work which they were getting done for 6*s.* 6*d.*, though in violation of that very agreement.

If Parliament were to empower a board of trade so constituted to affix penalties to the violation of the agreement which they had come to periodically, I do not think that they would then be ready and willing so to act, and of themselves to fix the best and most efficient check to violations of that sort; for this reason, it would be very inconvenient for the manufacturers and the weavers in a district sufficiently large to meet, because it would be impossible for England to pay a much higher rate of wages than Scotland or than Ireland; and the inquiry by schedule seems to me to be so much more compendious and easy, that I think it far preferable to any meeting of manufacturers and weavers; and I think that no such meeting could be got together in sufficient numbers to give security for the performance of the requisition. I should be very sorry to see it compulsory upon a certain district to pay such and such wages, and other districts to be exempted from it; if it were made imperative upon all the kingdom to pay it, it would be quite right. As to circumstances varying in different parts of the kingdom, according to the price of provisions and so on, which may make a different price reasonable. I never conceived that the rate of wages was regulated by what a man ought to earn, or by what a man requires to be spent for his comforts or his maintenance; but the rate of wages has always been determined by this, for how little can I get it done? and, therefore, the price of provisions, in my opinion, has nothing to do morally with the question. At present wages are regulated by the power of starvation on the part of the people, rather than by the degree of profit on the part of the manufacturers. If schedules were sent to Scotland and Ireland, as well as England, there would be probably a considerable difference in the prices paid for the same goods by manufacturers in the same line; under those circumstances, I would decidedly fix the maximum rate in the highest district as the minimum rate for the lowest-paid district. In Scotland I know that there are some cases of work being done 25 per cent. less than we are paying here; and several times I have missed orders and the Scotch have got them, although the only difference is in the price of weaving, and the Scotch weaver has as much right to protection as the English weaver has, and if there be any advantage in the price of provisions, or anything of that sort, let him have it; and if the English weaver finds that it would be better to go to Scotland, let him go there if he finds that he can live cheaper there. The true policy to be adopted is to give the weaver in all parts of the country every advantage that the nature of the trade will admit of, and if he lives in Scotland or in Ireland, where subsistence may be cheaper, he should have the benefit of that circumstance, and the English weaver should have the power of going to those cheap countries, in order that he may have a greater command of the necessaries of life than he has in his own country; but at the same time I must say, that if the Scotch weavers were brought up to the standard of the English weavers, the English manufacturer would be the first to raise the wages, and the Scotch would follow soon after; and he could afford to do it (*a*).

As to the comparative advantages of a minimum rate of wages, or a meeting of the masters and weavers in the different manufacturing districts fixing and varying from time to time, according to circumstances, a minimum price to be paid to weavers, I am of opinion that inquiry by schedule would be the most operative and most easy to carry into execution, the least subject to interruption from popular commotion, and the most efficacious, inasmuch as it would be the most extensive; and it would also have the advantages which are proposed in having the local boards, because that machinery would work in connexion with the local boards, whose business it would be to issue these schedules and to examine them before they were sent up, and whose office would be that of a court of appeal for any infringement of the conditions of the Act of Parliament. Partially that plan would be liable to the objection of giving publicity to merchants and others of the price of weaving different kinds of goods, but not in any way voluntarily; if the merchants wished it, they could obtain it, and they can obtain it now: lists would be only for manufacturers. The schedules should be returned to Government, which would prevent the rate of wages being made known perhaps to a greater

(*b*) Robert Gardner, Esq., 9 April 1835. Q. 1801. 2086–2088. 10 April 1835. Q. 2140–2168.
(*a*) Mr. John Makin, 16 July 1834. Q. 4940–1947.

greater extent than they are now; but the advantages to be derived would, I am morally certain, far outweigh and far more than counterbalance any disadvantages that would arise to the manufacturers by such a developement of prices. I cannot conceive that it would injure the foreign trade in any branch of business that I am connected with; I am not aware of any risk of exclusion of our goods from foreign markets, believing as I do that the competition of foreign manufacturers is more a bugbear than a reality. I have been in a house that has had extensive connexions with the first class of manufacturers in France, Prussia, Russia and Germany, and I know from actual inquiry that we have no cause to fear the competition of France; the production of French manufactures is at a greater cost than our own, for although the labour is lower nominally than ours, they do not perform so much of it, and coals are much higher; the machinery there is very good certainly, but they do not work it so long, neither will they ever be able to do so; and their dyeing establishments are not conducted upon that extensive scale which ours are, the French manufacturers being principally their own dyers, and our cotton ginghams do find their way into France, and undersell their own in Russia. I have had to do with the exportation of yarns for the finest quality of gingham, in a half manufactured state with corresponding wefts attached to them; these yarns went abroad ready for weaving in the Russian looms, and I have seen the cloth when it has been made there; I was told that the reason of that was because our cloth of that kind was inadmissible into their markets; they had to pay as much for those yarns and that weft as they would have had to pay for the cloth. As a proof that we have nothing to fear from foreign competition, though the French goods certainly stand very high, it is the fact that I have a ticket which has been put on the whole or nearly all the goods manufactured in a certain establishment, and they have gone out as French goods, ticketed with French labels in the French language, and averred to be manufactured in Lyons; and, in addition to that, I have taken the opinion of merchants, and had the opinion of one last Saturday, before I came away, upon the state of foreign manufactures, and upon the probability of their being rivals with us, and he gives it as his opinion that, with very few exceptions, we have nothing at all to fear.

If the prices of goods were raised in England by paying higher wages to the operatives employed in the production of these goods, it would immediately have a very considerable effect in raising the price of manufactures made abroad; the manufacturers abroad would naturally get as high a price as we do if they knew what ours were; decidedly so; and I am of opinion, from the constant intercourse there is between foreign houses and the British, that the prices of goods bought on the Continent and in England are known pretty accurately to both parties, and the same observation I wish also to apply to the rate of wages. It is now known in Manchester what is paid at Lyons for the same articles. A rise in the wages here would excite the Lyonese weavers to demand a greater rate of wages. There have been very serious differences between the employers and the employed, such as to throw the state of France into jeopardy; I should infer from that, that the manufacturers and the weavers are not there upon the best terms. If any operation could be carried into effect here that would better the condition of the weavers of this country, or lessen the difference now prevailing between the French manufacturers and their operatives, it would certainly strengthen the hands of those who are seeking to raise their condition.

Of cotton, there is more of it worked up in England than in all the countries of the world put together. Supposing, therefore, that Great Britain consumes more than one-half of the cotton produced, no alteration or change made in the manufacture of cotton in this country, nor any rise or fall of wages, can do otherwise than have a material effect upon the state of manufacture in other countries, seeing that Great Britain produces above one-half of the cotton goods worn in every part of the world; Great Britain, in fact, can dictate the prices. I infer from that, that Great Britain can raise the wages of the hand-loom weavers without injuring either the manufacturers or the weavers, or any of the manufacturers or weavers in foreign countries.

With reference to the silk trade, there might be more reason for an Act also to extend to France than for the cotton; but the cotton trade being in a measure nursed and brought to perfection in England, with so many natural advantages which it is possessing, I do not conceive the same observation would apply to the cotton as to the silk. The wages of cotton goods, if advanced in this country, would, I conceive, have no injurious operation on the trade as carried on by France and England conjointly; I mean to say, where they come into competition I do not think any advance to the weavers' wages by this measure would generally aid the competition of the French. I fancy that the foreign manufacturers now labour under these disadvantages which give England a power to raise the wages without operating to that extent; if the wages of the cotton weavers were raised so much as to raise the price of cloth, it would operate more upon the revenue of those states than it would upon the manufactures: because I believe that the reason they have put such enormous duties on our goods is that the cost of production in their country is so much greater than it is in ours, and it has tended to the exclusion of our goods. For a time it would tend more to the injury of the revenue than to the encouragement of their own manufactures; they would have to pay the same for them as they had before, and it would diminish the reason for the heavy import duties which they lay upon our goods, and would enable the merchants to demand a reduction of them, seeing that the price of weaving these goods had risen, and therefore there is not so much danger of competition from us.

It would be as easy to obtain schedules of the prices of power-loom weaving in the kingdom as it is to obtain by schedule the number of dogs or of windows, or a return of the prices of corn; and therefore as good a scheme of laying a foundation whereon to regulate wages. There is no plan which has been so satisfactory to my own mind. It would be practicable for the masters and weavers in the different manufacturing districts to fix and vary from time to time, according to circumstances, a minimum price to be paid for weaving, provided the Legislature were to pass a law simply to make such minimum binding on the manufacturers in their respective districts. Attempts have been frequently made at Bolton to fix a minimum price for weaving, and all such attempts have hitherto failed. These attempts would have been successful if it had been fixed within moderate limits; wherever the moral sense corresponds with the law, the law must be operative, and *vice versâ*. Supposing when the attempt was made in 1826 to fix the price at 8*s.* or 8*s.* 6*d.*, that had been fixed by law, the moral sense of the people of Bolton would have carried such a minimum into effect.

As the operation of this measure would be slow and silent, and as there would be prudence enough to watch the progress of the thing, the manufacturers or weavers would be ready to ask for

a power to stop or retract, but it is my opinion that it would be several years before such a power could be called for, and I think it would be wisdom in the Parliament, if they should please to legislate upon the subject, to make the Bill operative for three years, and then let it depend upon their condition, upon the joint petition of the masters and the men, whether the Bill should be renewed or not; and that is the utmost to which I, as an individual, would presume to ask for a protection of that kind. In the United States of America, where they have the raw material upon the spot, I am aware that heavy fabrics of goods are manufactured by power at a shade less cost than they have been done in England; but notwithstanding that difference, I am also aware that our goods of the same name are preferred in their own markets to theirs, in consequence of the superiority of our finish; but the fact of the Americans overdoing us in other points I certainly must question altogether. I have two brothers there, who have given me very accurate information upon the subject, and I believe they pretty well know what they are doing; in fact, my brother there has got the silver medal for improvements in the power-loom machinery. That coarser fabrics manufactured in the United States are extensively exported to South America, to Mexico, and to the Mediterranean, and even to China, I should not doubt; but considering the state of the cotton trade in America, and the growing exports of the coarser fabrics from that country, and contemplating what would be the ruinous result to the population of this country if the foreign manufacturers were permitted to undersell us, it is still my opinion that it would be better to run the hazard of establishing boards of trade, which should fix the price of wages, than to advance from the Government a loan of the public money, which should take off the superfluous hands from the hand-loom weavers, so as to bring up their wages to a level with the general wages of other operatives. I think so, for this reason; we should be securing a certain and immediate good to the weavers, whereas the operation in the way suggested would be slow and uncertain, and would at all times be subject to an objection from the parents themselves, and inasmuch as we should, if we found out the evil, have the power of coming down to the price which the Americans can ever produce goods at; but I should think the state of England would be better without a foreign trade than with it, at the expense of the slavery and starvation of the population (*b*).

William Hale, Esq. says, I recommend a minimum rate of wages being again restored, by giving a permissive power to the manufacturers and the weavers to regulate and render their rate imperative upon themselves and the manufacturers in different parts of the country, rather than by any compulsory legislation originating in Parliament alone. And it would be quite possible, and probably desirable, that those engaged in each peculiar manufacture should have a power to make any difference in the price of the article they manufactured, where distance from the market, or any peculiar obvious cause, might render reasonable a slight variation in the price that might be established in the other districts, under different circumstances; because, in point of fact, the object of a minimum rate of wages is to prevent an individual having at any time the absolute power of inflicting the greatest injury, not only on the workmen, but upon the whole body of the manufacturers in the same branch of business with himself. From an impression of so disastrous an evil, the power should not, under any circumstances, be lodged in the hands of any individual whatever; and in order to render the decision of those boards effective, it would not only be desirable, but necessary, that the majority of the manufacturers and weavers fixing the rate should have a power to enforce it upon any one individual who might be desirous not to accord with the plan, or after having accorded with it, violate the contract he had made. In France, although since the Revolution they have destroyed almost every vestige of the former system of national or local government, I have understood that it is in contemplation to revive and call into operation the ancient corporations which had been established previous to the Revolution, for the express purpose of trying the effect of this minimum rate of wages, which is calculated to produce justice if universally adopted in Great Britain. It is therefore very strong evidence in favour of the benefit and necessity of such a system, when we find that countries where provisions are cheaper, where taxes are lighter, and where the raw article is absolutely produced, have found it necessary to check this dreadful individual power to ruin the condition of persons engaged in trade; it is an additional proof of the necessity of some such regulation as a minimum rate, when we see that countries having all those advantages in our own immediate neighbourhood, still find the necessity of having this minimum regulation in their trade. I understand that there is, not only in Spitalfields, but in a great many different districts of Great Britain and Ireland, a desire to have some such agreement as to prices established. I believe all the manufacturers, I do not confine it to the silk trade, but of every description, would be glad to have it so. Although many persons were attracted by the doctrine of the advantages of free trade under more unshackled exchange with other countries, yet experience seems to point out that that natural and desirable object must still be subordinate to the maintenance of the condition of the manufacturing capital and the manufacturing population, exposed to heavy taxation, and that taxation pressing more particularly upon industry, and the capital which employs industry, than upon any other description of capital whatever. I believe there has become now a prevalent and almost an universal feeling in favour of it. It would be more beneficial to the condition of the working classes to have such a minimum rate of wages than any reduction of taxes, or alteration in the corn laws, suggested as better modes of relief by different individuals in different parts of the country. It would do more individual good to the working classes than repealing the corn laws, and every tax which could be spared. The benefit from the repeal of the corn laws, I should think, would not amount to a reduction of 2 *d.* in the quartern loaf, and a proportionable decline of other agricultural produce, if the whole rental of the kingdom were taken off. I speak thus hypothetically, believing that we cannot expect the price of bread much lower in consequence of any alteration that may take place. I certainly conceive that any tendency which the minimum rate of wages might have to raise wages generally, and thereby increase the power of competition which other countries now enjoy, and the temptation for smuggling which a different rate of wages naturally gives, is not at all to be put in comparison with the benefit and advantage which this regulation will afford to the country. And at all events I conceive there should not be the smallest delay in making the experiment, as I do not conceive that any possible injury could occur to the country by sanctioning such an uniform regulation for one year at least. On the contrary, the greatest blessing, I think, would follow the adoption of it. I believe it would tend to better the condition of the poor, increase their comfort, and effect their moral reformation.

The

(*b*) Mr. John Makin, 17 July 1834. Q. 5080–5099. 5067–5073. 5220–5223.

The manufacturers of Spitalfields have generally come to the same conclusion with myself. I have never met with one in this last twelvemonth that has discovered the least disposition contrary to the measure which I recommended; for those that were hostile to it seven years ago are willing to fall into it now; they seem to be convinced that something must be done to stop the degradation of the lower orders, and to prevent that which, if suffered to go on, will terminate in their utter ruin. Indeed I believe that it is of so much importance that Parliament should sanction this price of weaving, that it would be better to recommend its adoption immediately before any further inquiry, than to defer doing so until another session of Parliament.

I had a long conversation with Mr. Huskisson about the Spitalfields Act, and he said to me at last something about the keeping up the price of labour. I remember telling him one day, "If you reduce the price of labour you will destroy the morals of the people." His answer was, "Mr. Hale, you may be morally right, and I believe you are; but you are politically wrong." When I wrote my pamphlet I put as a motto, "Whatever is morally wrong can never be politically right." The steps taken by the manufacturers to get this Act repealed was by petition to Parliament; it was discussed, and the journeymen opposed it. The majority of the Spitalfields manufacturers drew up a petition recommending Government to keep the Act; the majority of the manufacturers in Spitalfields were for keeping the Act in force; the weavers and manufacturers sent petitions to Parliament praying that the Act might not be repealed; but the repeal of the Act was carried through Parliament contrary to the wishes of the whole body of weavers; still many of the manufacturers were fearful that it must be repealed when once Mr. Huskisson's Bill was brought in to take off the prohibition; then I believe they saw this Act must be sacrificed. The manufacturers who were favourable to the repeal were so upon the ground of the competition which they dreaded from the introduction of silk manufactures from the Continent. I believe the Act would never have been repealed, though its provisions might have been extended or modified so as to benefit the whole country, if Mr. Huskisson's measure, which lowered the duties on silks imported into this country, and took off the prohibition, had not passed. It was dread of foreign manufactures being introduced into this country, which could be sold cheaper than the Spitalfields manufacturers could produce them, that induced a large part of the manufacturers to apply for a repeal of the Act. I would not have the Legislature interfere to fix the rate of wages, but let the manufacturers and the operatives have the power of fixing it themselves; then when they have fixed it, it should stand till it is altered by a subsequent mutual agreement. If such a measure were adopted now, and extended to all parts of the kingdom where the silk manufacture is carried on, I see no reason whatever for thinking that such a regulation would be in any way injurious. I believe it would be the only boon that could be rendered to heal the distresses which now exist; it would restore comfort. Indeed I see no means of raising up the weaver to the station he ought to occupy in society without some such measure being adopted by the manufacturers and their men. I can conceive of nothing else that will effect their good, or uphold their best interests and promote their comforts. As to the way in which such a board of regulation could be constituted, I would not call them boards, I would leave the manufacturers and the committee of journeymen to settle that among themselves; it might be in every district or in every county.

Even were the same measure not adopted generally, I am not aware that the manufacturer of Manchester might try to manufacture lower than the manufacturer of Spitalfields. The competition would not be against each other; each would adjust their price according to the price of provisions. I have no doubt there would be that friendly feeling between the manufacturer and the journeyman which ought to be cultivated. I think, when a meeting of the manufacturers takes place they will boldly state, what they well know, what a poor man ought to have to keep him in comfort, and will pretty well agree as to what ought to be the price, and will voluntarily unite in it; and the journeymen will cheerfully accept it, and there will be an agreement on each side. When it comes to be binding it cannot be broken. The danger is, that when those things are agreed at a meeting, if it is not binding, possibly one individual may be found that will virtually break the treaty before the ink is dry on the paper, and one individual doing that will compel all the rest to do it. The price of wages for gros de Naples, in Spitalfields, now is per yard from 4 ½ *d.* to 5 *d.* and 6 *d.*; and as to the price of weaving of those articles in Manchester or Macclesfield, I do not think there is a penny difference; not more than the difference of the price of provisions. That penny difference would be no advantage to the manufacturer of Manchester. They will always be near enough to each other; the price of provisions will always adjust it, They can manufacture cheaper at Glasgow than they can at Manchester, and cheaper there than they can at Norwich, and cheaper at Norwich than in Spitalfields. The difference of price of provisions and carriage will regulate the matter. The manufacturers having the power to meet and regulate the wages, if they do not do it, of course there is no help for that; but I believe they will always be willing to do it; and I do not believe there would be a feeling among them to get the wages lower than they ought to be in Manchester or Spitalfields or anywhere, but that there would be a better feeling between masters and workmen than there is at present, as I would propose a power in the manufacturers and weavers to fix the price of weaving, and that it should not be reduced until there was a subsequent meeting, and the two parties agreed to raise or reduce it. Supposing this state of things now to exist, and that the Spitalfields manufacturers thought that they could give an advance, and thought it desirable to do so, the Spitalfields manufacturers and men might, and they resolved on taking such a step, but being not connected with Manchester, except as one individual is connected with another, and that the Manchester manufacturers and their weavers did not take the same steps, but continued the wages as they have been for two or three months longer, I do not think that any advantage would be given to the Manchester manufacturers and their workmen which the Spitalfields weavers and their masters might suffer from. I think their prices would come so near to each other generally. Manchester regulated itself by the price of Spitalfields; sometimes the Spitalfields price, under certain small reductions, was the standard. There never would be a disposition among the journeymen to lower and sink the price of wages to get an advantage one of another; the manufacturers in each district would feel it their duty to uphold the labourer from whose labour they derived their opulence (*c*).

Mr. *Thomas Myerscough* remarks, as to the difficulty which would arise in the weavers appointing a committee, and the masters appointing a committee, an equal number from each body, to ascertain what

(*c*) William Hale, Esq., 12 July 1834. 4225–4239. 4191–4212.

what would be the fair wages, and to fix a minimum price, that should not be altered till the board met again, and either raised or lowered that rate. Suppose Bolton was taken as the standard, perhaps there would be half a dozen boards of trade existing there; there might be two or three in Bolton, two or three in Blackburn, and two or three in Preston, and two or three at Manchester, consequently there would be all this dealing going on of these various boards of trade; they may come to opposite conclusions in every other town. For my own part I must say, I should like to submit to a trial of anything that would be practical: that it would materially benefit the weavers I doubt, yet I will not make any objection to the establishment of boards of trade, if it is thought by the Committee that they could be carried into effect; and though I do not see the practicability of the plan, I should be ready to join in it to try the experiment. That is the general feeling of the manufacturers of Bolton. I spoke to a manufacturer who makes the same description of goods we do, and asked him what he thought about it; he said, he should like to see it tried. With respect to one general board, composed of six masters and six weavers, being able to regulate the value of prices in the division of Bolton, I doubt very much whether it would or not; there is a great number of fabrics manufactured in Bolton, and there would be a difficulty to make the board clearly understand the relative position of each. I do not mean to say that might not be done; they might come to some sort of conclusion, but whether those conclusions would be satisfactory is a very great question with me. They might find some difficulty in adjusting the wages that should be paid for manufacturing. This board would consist of practical men, manufacturers and weavers. They would find no difficulty whatever in informing themselves, before they came to a decision, as to what a competent workman could earn in every branch of manufacture. They could very easily ascertain what they could earn, for they could have it from the parties who employ them. If the board of trade were more extensive, the difficulty would be less: but one of the objects is, to assimilate the wages of Bolton to those of Blackburn and Wigan, and other places, and they might come to opposite conclusions upon the matter; the board of trade in Blackburn or Bolton might fix a rate, and the board of trade of another place fix it higher or lower. The same branch of manufacture is carried on at Preston, at Wigan, at Manchester, at Bolton and the surrounding neighbourhood. There is a variety of prices now in the neighbourhood, which induces the manufacturers of Bolton to go to these various places, and the same thing takes place when manufacturers from other places come into Bolton. It is possible that boards of trade, constituted at Bolton, Manchester, and the surrounding towns to communicate with each other, and to fix such rate of wages as would be fair both to the manufacturers and to the weavers, might accomplish that, if there was a desire on the part of both. Assuming that to be practicable, and that the first act of that board of trade were to advance the wages of the hand-loom weavers 50 per cent., I cannot undertake to say the effect which would be immediately produced; if the manufacturer could realize the difference he paid, he would go on; if not, there might be difficulty, in the first instance, to get it accomplished. In the first instance I think it would have a tendency to lessen the production and supply of goods. Supposing that the minimum was fixed by this board at 50 per cent. higher than is now paid, and that was to remain stationary till the board met again to alter it, it is very likely the prices of manufactured goods would rise so as to take off the whole which could be produced. Confidence would be given not only to manufacturers who held stocks of goods, but to those who held none. No disadvantage would arise to the masters from fixing such a minimum, if the event would be the lessening the quantity of goods without interfering with the foreign competition; that would be productive of good to the labourer himself and also to the manufacturer; but it is probable there might be introduced in the meantime operations by power, that would go to produce the very same fabrics of cloth now produced by the hand-loom weavers, and consequently take the market from those that would not be able to give the prices fixed by the board. But the advocates for the board say, we do not want to raise the price of wages immediately; we only want to proceed step by step in the first instance, to ascertain what is really paid throughout the country, then to fix the highest prices paid by the highest paying manufacturers; and then, supposing that shows a number of manufacturers giving higher wages, that should be the standard whereby to get up or raise the price of labour from its present condition. I do not anticipate that any such effect will be produced as an immediate rise of 50 per cent. on the establishment of these boards; but supposing that the competition should be increased by encouragement being given to production by power, it would be easy for boards, if established, to regulate the production by power as well as by hand, so that no one could suffer from such a regulation, as it would be much more easy and practicable to carry any minimum of time and labour in the factories than it is to fix a minimum for the hand-loom weavers. If both these things are practicable, the supply of goods might be regulated according to the demand for them, in a superior way to that which now exists. The effect of the abridgment of the time in factories and the time of hand-loom weaving which would take place by an advance of wages, would lead to a less production of goods, and consequently relieve the markets of those cloths which frequently are sent out of the country without receiving an adequate return for them. I believe that both manufacturers and spinners would benefit by such an arrangement (*d*).

The weavers of Belfast instructed their delegate to lay before the Committee the following Plan of a Board of Trade for the Hand-loom Weavers employed in the Cotton Trade in *Ireland*:

"That there shall be one supreme board of trade for Ireland, and established in Belfast, to consist of three competent persons, two of which shall form a quorum, but to have full powers to settle all disputes that may arise or come before them.

"That there shall be one subordinate board, whose duty it shall be to superintend and regulate the prices of workmanship in all branches of the cotton trade performed by hand-loom weavers in Ireland; and this board to be separate from, and independent of any of the boards of England or Scotland.

"That the board shall consist of a certain number of manufacturers and weavers, who shall sit once a quarter, or at stated periods, and shall be empowered to regulate the rates of workmanship of each respective fabric, so that as far as possible it shall be consistent with the mutual benefit of master and workmen, and the prosperity of the trade at large.

"That the manufacturers and weavers shall respectively appoint from their own bodies the necessary

(*d*) Mr. Thomas Myerscough, 15 July 1834. Q. 4632-4653.

sary number to constitute a board, and who shall be taken from the different districts of the country in proportion to the quantity of manufactures carried on therein.

"That every question decided by this board which shall have the unanimous consent of a full meeting, shall be final.

"That in the event of the votes being equally divided, the case shall be submitted to the consideration of the supreme board, whose decision as umpire shall be final.

"That this board, in settling the price of workmanship, shall be guided as nearly as possible by the data of what the manufacturers of principle and respectability could reasonably afford to pay without bringing the trade into jeopardy by the competition of foreign nations.

"That the prices of workmanship thus set shall not be a fixed rate, which every manufacturer shall be obliged to pay and no more, but a minimum under which they shall not be permitted to come, leaving at all times any individual at liberty to rise as much above it as is suitable to his interest when forwarding an order, or when he wishes to increase his trade.

"That the regulations of this board shall be binding till next sitting, and to be enforced by suitable penalties imposed on all open transgressors, and those who evade the law (*e*)."

John Scott, a delegate from the silk weavers at Manchester, on being asked, "What plan do the weavers wish to propose to better their present condition?" answered, They have petitioned for boards of trade. There are various opinions as to which of the plans would be the most efficient. The meeting which appointed me instructed me to say, that they think that one general board to regulate the price throughout the kingdom would be most beneficial to them; they do not square their opinions according to the probability of obtaining their wishes, they look to what would be most essential. They would prefer a uniformity of price throughout the whole kingdom to the local boards; yet they have no objection to take the local boards, or even Mr. Fielden's plan, provided that no better provision could be made. They have no decided objection to any one of the plans, but their preference is given to the general board. In 1818 (I am now speaking with regard to the silk-weavers, not the hand-loom weavers generally) there was an inquiry as to the practicability of extending the Spitalfields Act throughout the whole country where silk weaving was carried on; the weavers generally concurred in the proposed plan; they sent up a person to represent their wish before that Committee; and it appears that they have not altered their sentiments upon that question yet. They still wish for a general board of trade upon the principle of the Spitalfields Act, though not upon the exact principle of that Act. They would wish that the prices of weaving should vary according to the state of the market; they do not wish Parliament to regulate the wages for them, as it is the opinion of some that the Spitalfields Act did, which in fact was not the case. They wish masters and men to be allowed to regulate them conjointly, and that to be made binding by an Act of Parliament. That from time to time the masters and the weavers should agree in a certain rate of wages, which should be in operation for a limited time, and that afterwards that regulation should be binding, by Act of Parliament, upon all making the various description of goods throughout the empire; and at the end of the term for which that regulation was to be binding, they would be willing to enter into another regulation, according to the state of the market, and that that should be binding again for another period. The tendency either of a general board or a local board of trade, or of Mr. Fielden's plan, would be to produce a gradual improvement in wages, because the manufacturers would not be afraid of their neighbours underselling them, as it regards the amount of wages paid on the article manufactured. Whether, if an Act were founded on the plan proposed by Mr. Fielden, could such an Act be easily evaded?—All institutions are, in a limited extent, evaded in some shape or other; but I do not see why that should militate against the passing of the Act, because, upon that ground, we might say that a law to prevent all people from robbing, because some few steal, would be useless.—But supposing a case, that it should be for the interest of the master and the weaver; in a case of robbery it is always the interest of one party not to be robbed, though it is the interest of the other to rob him; but suppose a case where it was the interest of the master to give a lower rate of wages, and for the weaver to conceal the fact that he was receiving a lower rate of wages, how then would the Act reach them where both parties were interested in evading the Act?—It is possible that might be the case; but it would only be to a very limited extent, and we might as well argue that tolls are of no use in preserving the roads, because some compound for the toll contrary to law.—Supposing a penalty were inflicted on both parties in the event of a discovery, do you think then it could be evaded to any extent?—I think a penalty would have the effect of lessening the chance of evasion. The manufacturers have more power to depress than the workmen have to raise the wages. According to the present state of things the manufacturers have a decided advantage over the weavers; it is the interest of all the manufacturers to reduce to the lowest rate of wages, and the weavers going individually to obtain work, are through their poverty compelled to take it at the master's price. The town weaver is told that if he will not take it plenty in the country will; and the country weaver is told that there are plenty in the town who will be glad of it; and thus we are made the instruments in reducing our own wages. In reference to how we would arrange in sudden contingencies, such as always occur in trade, how we would arrange for the regulation of the wages under such circumstances; how we would enable a weaver to benefit himself by an advance, or to secure himself against a decline, when there was not work between the six months; the weavers and the manufacturers could be called together by ordinary means in the same way as any other meeting is called together, stating the object of such a meeting, which could be discussed, and the possibility of an advance, or the necessity of a reduction determined; for my part, I cannot see any objection to such a plan. A certain number of weavers, or a certain number of manufacturers, might be empowered to call a meeting to meet such an emergency. One of the provisions of the Act might be that. Persons should be appointed by the bodies of each party, the body of the masters, and the body of the men; they might have a standing committee for a given space of time, and both parties be called together. I conceive that it would be considerably better than the present state of things. I would have the rate of wages to extend wherever that description of work was made. I know there is a difficulty involved there, because in some parts of the country an advance might be made, and in others a reduction required. One of the reasons why the silk weavers of Manchester wish a general board in preference to local ones is, that Macclesfield is paying something above Manchester; now if the Macclesfield manufacturers should reduce to Manchester prices, and they have made several attempts, we are very well aware that the Manchester manufacturers, having the power to reduce us again, will do so, and thus we may go down still lower and lower (*f*).

Mr.

(*e*) John Boyd, 3 April 1835.

(*f*) John Scott, 10 April 1835. Q. 2506-2552.

Mr. *R. Oastler* observes: There has been a very great effort made to endeavour to establish a regular system throughout all the trades in the West Riding. The plan that was adopted was the establishment of what was called the trades' unions, which were established for the express purpose, in the first instance, of making what they call the bad masters give as large wages as the good masters gave. At the time when they began there was a very considerable difference between the rate of wages in the Leeds district and the Huddersfield district; the object of the trades' union in Huddersfield was to raise the Huddersfield prices up to the Leeds prices. I have heard several masters express their dissatisfaction with the want of uniformity in wages very strongly indeed; and I have always recommended the operatives to endeavour to join their masters with them in their unions, in order that they might agree amongst themselves without quarrelling, and get fair wages for a fair day's work; and the operatives have been willing to do it, and on one occasion did positively offer to do it, but it was not agreed to; I do not know why, I was sorry for it; but I have heard individual masters very much wish that the unions would do away with their secrets, and do away with their intimidation, and publish all their proceedings, if they only did want to raise their wages, and then they said they should be very glad to help them; and I recollect one very large manufacturer telling me that if I could prevail with the unions to do away with their secrets and their intimidation, whenever they wanted money they might go to him, and he would at any time give them 50*l.* to help them to raise their wages to the price that they were aiming at; and in fact, several masters told me that if that were done they would be glad to render the men any assistance that they could; and I recollect one master telling me one day, about a year and a half ago, he met me in Huddersfield, and he said, "Mr. Oastler, I am very glad to see you, for I have abused you more than I have abused any man, because I thought you backed those men in the unions; but I have found that they do us a great deal of good, for I have been paying men more than my neighbours had, and they have brought my neighbours up to my price; they have been underselling me all along.

I do not know anything of their secrets; I judge from the character of the men merely, and from their proceedings; but I believe the trades' unions have had no political intention whatever; I believe that they have had no other intention whatever in their institution; that their sole object has been, to endeavour to obtain a good day's wages for a good day's work, and I believe they have had no ulterior view whatever; but when 20,000, or 30,000 or 40,000 men are united together, although they were all sworn, as those men were all sworn, to keep the law and not to break the peace, and to be sober and temperate, and so on, it requires better discipline than we have, even in the British army, to keep them all to it. I have been in the habit of addressing hundreds, and thousands sometimes; yes, ten and twenty, and one hundred thousand; but I have often asked those operatives whom I have considered the most intelligent and the most respectable, and the most influential, whether there was anything in their institution that was contrary to what they declared them to be, viz. a desire to raise their wages and keep their wages up, and they have all assured me, that the secret was not worth keeping, and that there was nothing whatever in their rules but what tended to peace, good order and sobriety, and morality; they have assured me of that, and some of them are highly respectable men, and I believe would not tell a fib. I think that the working men would be very willing and very glad to leave those unions, that they should be broken up totally, provided some regulation relative to wages could be obtained by the sanction of the Legislature, that would enable them to live by their labour. I believe that they would be delighted with it; I have heard them over and over again express to me their regret that they were obliged to spend so much time in doing that which Government ought to do for them; that it is exceedingly against their wishes that they should have to go to their lodges, and to perform the things they were bound to; and almost all have their lodges in public-houses. I have heard them over and over again regret that they could not get houses and living without turning legislators themselves; and I have heard them on very many occasions complain of the Government, that they did not save them that trouble; and I do think they were reasonable in the complaint; for it is in the power of Government to amend their condition; it is the very office of Government. I think that it ought to be done in this way, that the time of labour ought to be shortened, and that Government ought to establish a board, such a one as I believe the Committee is intending to recommend, which I have wished for many years; a committee chosen by the masters and the men, in which both can confide, to empower them to settle the question of how wages shall be regulated. The first measure, that of shortening the time of labour, would reduce the quantity in the market, and would materially lessen the labour of those boards of trade; there would not be so much for them to do; but if the hours of labour were not limited, and those boards of trade were called to work as many hours as any capitalists or speculators chose to force the operatives to work, long hours, those boards would be no sinecure places; they would be employed many hours a day, I am sure. I would not put an end to the freedom of labour, but I would put an end to the freedom of murder, and to the freedom of employing labourers beyond their strength; I would put an end to anything which prevents the poor man getting a good living with fair and reasonable work: and I would put an end to this, because it was destructive of human life.

Were the present maximum rate of wages given for the goods manufactured in Bolton, and for all descriptions of hand-loom in the kingdom, established by Act of Parliament, as a minimum rate of wages, below which no manufacturer should descend without subjecting himself to a penalty, such a measure would afford relief to the weaver, and give confidence to the manufacturer to go on manufacturing when the demand is languid, and thereby prevent a repetition of those great fluctuations and those injurious consequences, which both manufacturers and weavers have severely suffered from. The present maximum rate of wages might be ascertained by inquiries by schedules, to be returned to Government, and form the basis of a minimum of wages, to be fixed in any legislative enactment upon the subject. It has struck me that it would be as easy to obtain by schedule a return of the prices paid for weaving of standard fabrics, as it would be to obtain the number of horses and dogs, and carriages, and servants, and other things, the number of windows and such like, the knowledge of which the Government do now obtain by schedule; but if the Parliament should not think it wise to go into the plan of regulating the wages by a board of trade, there is a plan by which the weavers' wages might be raised and protected, without the interference of a regulating board in progress; which plan is this, to make an inquiry, by schedule in the first instance, what are the rate of wages, and have some competent manufacturer to govern the committee or board of committee, as to what is the proper rate of wages for every fabric, and make that for a period of time the settled minimum, and then say in a period of time beyond that, say six months, it should be advanced another 6*d.* or 1*s.* or what not, and that that proceeding should go on for three or four years, and then inquire into the result.

If

If power were given to the manufacturers to fix and vary the minimum to be agreed on by the weavers and masters according to circumstances, the moral sense of the manufacturers and the weavers collectively would insure the carrying of that law into effect, provided that law had equal operation over the kingdom; if it had not, I will answer for it it would be a failure. The Spitalfields Act for securing a minimum rate of wages operated only on Spitalfields; it had no operation on Macclesfield or Manchester, or any place without the boundaries of Spitalfields, and by that circumstance the mode of evasion was placed opposite to the restriction of the law. Here is a law that binds you; if you depart from that place you are at liberty. I have found further, that whilst that law was in operation in Spitalfields the poor-rates were extremely low; that crime was rarely known; that the condition of the weaver was much superior to what it is at the present time. If there was a failure at all arising out of the Spitalfields Act from what took place in consequence of that, I attribute it to the want of such regulation being made general throughout the kingdom, and not to any defect in the Act itself, or the willingness of the Spitalfields manufacturers to be regulated by it. I do attribute it to the defect in the Act itself not extending over the kingdom, and to the unwillingness of the manufacturers to be regulated by it, seeing that it had its operation on the people in that one particular district, and left them open to the competition of persons not similarly bound. I am aware that the majority of manufacturers and the whole almost of the weavers petitioned the Legislature that the Act might not be repealed; and I therefore infer that both the manufacturers and the weavers thought the Act was advantageous to them notwithstanding it was not extended to any other part of the kingdom; but I should have thought the proper course for both parties to have pursued, would have been to pray for the extension of that Act over the United Kingdom (*g*).

The following suggestions on the advantages to be derived from the establishment of local boards of trade in Coventry, were suggested to the Committee by Mr. J. Jenkins.

It could decide differences between masters and workmen, and between masters and apprentices.

It might put into operation the livret system of France, which would enable workmen leaving their homes for want of employment to obtain it in places where they were unknown, and by which the losses of manufacturers by embezzlements would be diminished.

It could establish a school of art, the principal thing wanted to put the English ribbon manufacturer on a level with the French.

It would stimulate mechanical invention and skill by distributing rewards and honours.

It could facilitate the introduction of the best machinery used in other places, and improved modes of manufacture.

It could collect statistical information, and prevent the continual necessity of Parliamentary inquiries.

It would be instrumental in introducing new branches of industry to take up the surplus labour of a place.

It would enable workmen to obtain the full market price for their labour, and, when the state of the demand justified it, would facilitate their obtaining advances in wages.

It could counteract the present practice of weavers bringing up their children to branches of trade already overstocked with workmen, and assist their introduction into other trades where labour was wanting (*h*).

The manufacturers if left to themselves would not again resort to the system of endeavouring to raise wages by instalments. They cannot do it, there are so many that will not do it, that will undersell one another. I would then propose we should give the good manufacturers the power of protecting the weaver against the practices of the bad manufacturers. It appears to us that Scotland has proposed a plan of settling all those disputes by boards of trade, by meetings of masters and meetings of men; we think this is far preferable to the plan of turn-out or the union system; we like the principle, but how far that principle can be carried into effect we do not pronounce; Scotland has suggested that plan, and we wish to act in harmony with Scotland, but at the same time we have suggested a plan of our own, that nobody shall regulate wages, but that they shall regulate themselves. We propose that a return shall be made from every principal district of the cotton trade of the prices paid for working every kind of goods to some proper authority, and that this authority shall be authorized by Act of Parliament: when those returns are made, to strike the mean price, on the same principle as the Comptroller of Corn Returns pronounces the averages and the amount of duty thereon; as, for instance, if the 60-reed paid 7*s.* in Bolton, 10*s.* in Manchester, and 8*s.* in Stockport, take the mean of those rates, which is 8*s.* 4*d.*, and make that the minimum of the wages; that is our plan: then no man becomes the regulator; it is the natural state of the trade that regulates; when the finger points to 8*s.* 4*d.*, we ought to have it; but if it only points to 6*s.*, we can only have that rate till the trade warrants more. Enforce it by Act of Parliament, as the tax on corn or any other tax is enforced; we can do nothing without an Act of Parliament. Those constituted authorities ought to be neither master nor workmen. They would be as able to judge as persons appointed to inspect the price of corn. Let the Board of Trade at once. Send up the returns to the Board of Trade; let the magistrates or high constables of every district send up a return to the Board of Trade of the amount of wages paid for every sort in that neighbourhood, and then the President of the Board of Trade, when those were arranged and simplified, and laid before him, he could at once state what the minimum ought to be, and the law would declare the minimum. Every manufacturer should return his prices to the Board of Trade. Supposing there were twenty different towns, and five of those that paid higher wages than the fifteen, I should say that those five should be the minimum. There would need no persons in the country; obtain the information by sending an order down to the boroughreeve or the high constable. The manufacturers, as a body, will heartily concur in giving any information that will benefit the condition of the weavers. It would be desirable that the manufacturers should be recommended to have a meeting, and to fix upon certain persons in their body to make the requisite inquiry as to wages, and to furnish the same to the Government, and also when there is an opportunity of raising that minimum rate, to again communicate to the Board of Trade that fact; manufacturers, if left to themselves, would take that course.

(*g*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3765, 3766. 3771-3776. 5063, 5064. 5074-5078.
(*h*) Mr. J. Jenkins, 15 April 1835. Q. 4545.

course. As far as Bolton goes, I am satisfied they would; the plan I should submit would be this, that it should not be left to a meeting of the masters or the men; but that at stated periods those returns should be made to the Government, regularly every year or every half year; every year is quite sufficient, because if once a rate is made you will never want another. This minimum rate is to vary according to the state of trade; it is to be ascertained when it ought to be lowered by the returns, and these returns can never be below the minimum. They are to vary upwards but not downwards (*i*).

The immediate effect of boards of trade would be to equalize and steady wages to the operative; as to the effect of raising the price to the consumer, it is hypothetical; of the other there is no question. We all know that profit is a very intangible thing, and so much in the hands of the vendor, that whether the dress be 20*s.* or 21*s.*, it would not have any effect in diminishing sales.

Supposing there were a board of trade composed of half masters and half workmen, as to what rate of wages should be paid, I think they ought to have referees, to be chosen by the masters and men from time to time, in the event of a difference. If the boards of trade were established, the wages could be raised in the present state of trade. I think everybody could pay 7*d.* for plain silk goods if they chose, instead of 6*d.* I found that opinion upon the conviction that the present duty upon foreign manufactured silks would enable us to pay 7*d.* per yard for the works in question, if the duty were collected on foreign manufactured silks; but now there is a very large quantity of smuggled goods introduced into this market (*k*).

In the event of a board of trade being established in England and Scotland, the Irish manufacturers would not object to have the same principle introduced into Ireland. The manufacturers and the weavers in Ireland have been both afflicted in the same way that they have in this country; the one by underselling, and the other by a reduction of wages. The manufacturers and the weavers of Belfast and other parts of Ireland, so far from complaining, if there was the same rate of wages given in all parts of the empire for the same work, would be happy to be united in that way, by reason, that if the Irish could find employment at home they would not come to this country. If they could have as much wages in Belfast as they can have at Preston, they would not come to Preston. If those boards of trade were to fix the prices a little higher for weaving in Ireland than they are at present, the manufacturers at Belfast and other parts of Ireland would not object to that, but on the contrary, they would be perfectly willing, and satisfied that it was for their good and the benefit of their country that this higher rate of wages should be introduced, provided it was general throughout England and Scotland at the same time. I am convinced that that is the general feeling of the great body of the manufacturers (*l*).

The boards should consist of both workmen and masters, in order to settle any fixed price for the guidance of both. It is a first principle in these boards that masters and men should be considered constituent parts of the boards, having both one interest, perhaps in an equal proportion. I apprehend that the bringing together master and workmen for this purpose would tend to promote good feeling and understanding, of which now there is an absence (*m*).

Moreover, Providence has designed that labour, which is the capital of the working man, should be protected, and not to be taken from him by those that have the power, that is, the capital. The protection we require for labour would be requisite, even if there was a good demand for the products of labour; for it is not long since a manufacturer was talking to me about the corn laws; he remarked, that we would be able to work something cheaper when corn would be reduced; and I asked him, what would that better our situation; "by receiving less wages in proportion to the cheapness of food we should be just where we are: though you would perhaps export more goods, and get more profit, we would not be benefited at all." The legislative protection that we require in the shape of a board of trade is what we have prayed for. The opinion of the weavers has run in favour of one general board of trade. One general committee, if practicable, would, they think, be the best; it would have the effect similar to putting the trade all into the hands of one man, who would be able to carry on a competition with foreigners better than it ever can be done by a great number of capitalists. As to the best manner of managing local boards, my opinion is this: I will take the silk trade, for example; it is a smaller concern than the cotton. I would divide the country into districts, one to be regulated by London, another by Macclesfield, and another by Manchester; and, in fact, I would allow every place where manufacturers reside to have their own committee or boards, making sure that no place should be exempt. I would fix a day for choosing the committees; I would require the London committee to meet first; and after they had prepared and published their list, for the rest to proceed in the same manner. I have no doubt that the weavers in other parts would endeavour to get London prices; and the propriety of those would be discussed between the masters and the workmen, and sufficient reasons shown whether those prices could be obtained or not. The weavers do not want a law to compel the capitalist to pay a certain rate of wages; they want a law passed to authorize them to adjust the rate of wages according to the state of the capitalist's market. As to whether there would be any use in adjusting, unless it made an advance, an advantage might be obtained, and very great evils would be prevented, by making all manufacturers pay the same price for the same article, for any certain space of time. An avaricious manufacturer, or a needy manufacturer, would not have an opportunity of reducing his wages, and thereby injuring the stocks of other manufacturers (*n*).

With reference to the Legislature making an Act, which should be in its operation general throughout the silk trade, to raise the wages of the silk weaver to 12*s.* a week, I would fix no price. The plan I would recommend is, that the manufacturers should meet in a district, and appoint a committee of operatives, and have a conference; they would soon unite and agree, with an affection for each other, in what may be considered a fair remunerating price for labour; and where that is once fixed on, I would let it be continued till it is altered by a subsequent mutual agreement between the masters and the men. The prices in Spitalfields might differ from those at Norwich and Manchester,

(*i*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5436–5458. (*l*) Robert Crawford, 19 July 1834. Q. 5919–5924.
(*k*) J. Ballance, Esq. 16 June 1834. Q. 125. 129–137. (*m*) J. Ballance, Esq. 16 June 1834. Q. 113–116.
(*n*) John Scott, 11 April 1835. Q. 2685–2697.

chester, and those possibly at Glasgow, as in proportion to the distance from the metropolis it affects the price of provisions; that will easily be adjusted. From the experience I have had, and an intimate acquaintance with the working people, I am disposed to think that they are reasonable beings, and that they would always be reconciled to working for such wages as their employers could afford to give; and on that account I think they are entitled to have a voice in regulating the value of labour, whereby they and their masters would have a better understanding, and be mutually regulated. I always found them very reasonable, and always acted with them with a great deal of pleasure; the existing gradations of society were more respected in Spitalfields than in any other place in consequence of that. I think that the interest of the employers and the employed is precisely the same; you cannot destroy the one without destroying the other; and the employers cannot take any measure calculated to injure the work-people but they must suffer in their turn (*o*).

The hand-loom weavers, in a letter to *Edward Baines*, esq., M.P., dated 14 April 1835, observe: "If Mr. Fielden wished to grant real relief to the hand-loom weavers, he would say to the Committee, there is 800,000 of them, and they are in the greatest distress (and surely they are of as much consequence in the scale of society, and as well deserving of our notice, as 800,000 slaves). Their foreign trade has been destroyed by the corn laws; their labour has been taken from them by the power-looms; their bread is taxed, their malt is taxed, their tea, their sugar, their soap, and almost every other article they use or consume is taxed, but the power-loom is not taxed. You must modify the corn laws; you must take off the taxes on wool, oil, cotton, flax, hemp, silk, soap, dye wares, and all other raw materials imported into this country, used in manufactures, and lay on a duty to counteract the Prussian tariff on all British wool and yarns exported from this country. You must appoint local boards to fix the minimum of wages to be paid for labour, and whatever rate of wages they may award as the price to be given for weaving; they shall have power to lay a tax on power-looms for the service of the state (on every piece woven by them) equal to one-fourth of such wages for every description of work woven by them. If Mr. Fielden can get a law passed as above stated, it would give real relief to the hand-loom weavers."

With reference to the raising of wages, it would be beneficial to this country that wages should be raised 25 per cent.

Suppose a rise of 25 per cent. in wages were to be effected in England, that rise in wages here immediately would be acted upon in France, and cause a corresponding rise to the same extent. Then the Americans, who bring their cotton to Europe, would find the goods as dear in France as in England. If the production were diminished in consequence of the wages being raised here, and in France, 25 per cent., the manufacturers in both countries would benefit in carrying on their operations with America, unless the Americans also took some means of raising the price of their produce; and it is likely that the Americans, to counteract the effect of this rise of prices here, might reduce the supply of cotton and other articles which they produce, so as to restore the relative rate of prices between the three countries (*p*).

In reference to carrying British manufactures to the foreign market under the operation of a rise of 25 per cent. in the price of goods, the first year of its introduction, they would not get an entrance. In America I understand the duties placed generally on our goods amounted to from 25 to 35 per cent., that is upon the value of the goods themselves; if the goods were raised 25 per cent. the effect would be a reduction of the tariff, for they would not need to lay so high a duty upon us. We are not only competing against the foreigner, but with ourselves in each country; consequently, if a reduction of wages were to take place, and we produced goods at a less price, all they would have to do to meet the difficulty would be to put an additional 15 or 20 per cent. upon us. They lay on what they consider to be a protection (*q*).

The improvement of the market, which we are sure of possessing, is a preferable object of policy to endeavouring to look to other countries for our market. If I had the two to choose from, I should choose the home customer in preference to the foreign; because from the home customer we can get a better profit than from the foreigner (*r*).

The wages paid in France are higher, in reference to what they can purchase and the enjoyments they bring. A weaver at Lyons would think himself badly off if he could not afford to go to the theatre and amuse himself on Sunday; but distress frequently arises in France from the love of pleasure natural to the French people, and which makes them always anxious to amuse themselves as much and work as little as they can. The effect of any legislative enactment in this country, if it raised the rate of wages of weaving, would have upon the prices of weaving in France, would not be much. The French manufacturer, where his goods came into competition with ours, would very probably immediately avail himself of it; but I do not think our manufactures come much into competition with the French manufactures in foreign markets. Where we excel and where the French excel are in two different branches. In all the cheaper parts of the manufactures we can, from having Bengal and Chinese silk, and from other circumstances, make things so much cheaper, that in that branch of manufactures we have too decided a superiority to fear competition; in another branch, the French, by their superior taste, a taste arising from a variety of causes, beat us out of the market. We take up the market in one sort of goods, as they do in another. I do not think it is a foreign competition that is assumed, but a home competition. And here what I said applies; in all the fancy branches our manufactures have been driven almost out of our own market, by the introduction of French goods. It is not, I think, the price of wages which gives France her greatest advantage over us; that advantage lies in a superior taste and skill, arising from a long combination of events; a kind of literary spirit, if I may so express myself, diffused throughout France, by which the milliner, for instance, in the graceful combination of her goods, gives a sort of fictitious price to the articles she sells. The French manufacturers know this to be the cause of any preference they possess, and they as well as the government take every pains to encourage and increase it (*s*).

The

(*o*) William Hale, Esq. 12 July 1834. Q. 4185–4189.
(*p*) Mr. Thos. Myerscough, 16 July 1834. Q. 4789. 4785–4788.
(*q*) Mr. Thos. Myerscough, 15 July 1834. Q. 4669.
(*r*) Mr. John Makin, 18 July 1834. Q. 5264.
(*s*) H. L. Bulwer, Esq., M.P., 23 July 1834. Q. 7057–7060.

The objections urged against the proposed Boards of Trade are similar to those urged against a minimum rate of prices; some objections are however peculiar:—*Mr. Thos. Myerscough* says—My opinion is, that, in the first place, there is no board of trade which could be established so as to be made to understand the various fabrics manufactured; they are so very extensive, so very multifarious. With regard to local boards of trade, one of the objects of the petition from Bolton was, that they might so regulate labour in various districts as to bring them to something like an equality; but if there were local boards of trade, a local board of trade established in Blackburn, or Preston, or Manchester, or Bolton, might vary with every other, and that would destroy the object which the parties had in the establishment of these boards of trade (*t*).

I recollect an instance where the bleachers associated together for the purpose of raising the price of bleaching goods, and they were not bound by any law, but they were bound by the honour of the respective parties, to keep the prices up to that which they had previously agreed upon; but I do not believe a month had gone over their heads before many of them had violated that contract. I know, with respect to ourselves, it was decidedly violated, and our goods went to another bleacher, in consequence of his agreeing to take the old price, though he had agreed to what had been understood amongst the bleachers previously; and others, though they took the same prices nominally, allowed discounts of various amounts, and made the best bargains they could with the different manufacturers. The end of it was, that the whole association was broken to pieces. They had no means of enforcing the agreement contrary to the wish of the parties (*u*).

Another objection is on principle. One of my objections to an interference by the Legislature between master and workmen for regulating wages is, that there would be no end to the application of the principle; if it is applied in this instance, it may be called for in another, and the Government of the empire, which ought to attend to great concerns, would be involved at last in all the petty details of such affairs; if a Government do not impose improper restrictions the people will protect themselves from starvation; the energy of the mind and active industry and talent will find for themselves their own protection, if Government do not impose improper restrictions, fiscal or legislative.

In reference to the question whether until such time as a better financial system can be introduced, or an enormous reduction of taxation can take place, it would be expedient and just to use every means within the power of Parliament to enable the working classes to command such a proportion of the necessaries and comforts of life as becomes indispensable for their health, their morals and their good conduct; on general principles I am averse to a Government interfering in the private relations of life, either between the manufacturer and his operatives, or in any concern which can be regulated by private communities, or corporations, or associations; but under the present state of things, with adverse and counteracting interests, some people advocating one and others supporting another, and with the heavy burdens pressing on this peculiarly constituted society, holding also as I do, that England at present is in a state of transition (though of a far higher and nobler grade) similar to what occurred in the time of Queen Elizabeth, I think that temporary expedients may be to some extent justifiable, if more permanent relief be not granted (*x*).

It is contended, however, that the formation of local boards of trade would put down the trades' unions. The reductions of the prices of weaving in hand-looms have had a considerable influence in promoting trades' unions amongst persons engaged in other occupations and receiving better wages; and the hand-loom weaver would be raised into a better condition by having better wages. The masters who employ hand-loom weavers have not generally derived any benefit from reducing the wages of the weaver; nor would other masters, in endeavouring to check those unions by resorting to the same practice of the reduction of wages, derive any advantage from suppressing the unions and reducing the wages, in the present situation in which business is carried on. The unions then, when not abused, are good for masters as well as men in other employments, inasmuch as such unions operate to some extent in preventing a reduction of wages. It is certainly of the utmost importance that those unions should continue, but not to the extent that they have continued. The best mode of suppressing those unions would be to give the labourers protection for wages, which would destroy the necessity for combination, and by destroying the necessity for combination you destroy the unions (*y*).

The formation of boards of trade to regulate prices appears to have been long contemplated.—As to the desirableness of having boards of trade, it has certainly been the opinion of the weavers, to my knowledge, for 30 years past, and that has been amply proved by the evidence already given. I have a document in my hand which I received from Mr. Ratcliffe at Blackburn, and I will, by the leave of the Committee, read it. The date is not mentioned, but it is a petition to the House of Commons, which was presented in 1808.

A COPY of the COTTON WEAVERS' PETITION, and their Clauses.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.——The humble Petition of the undersigned persons, being Journeymen Cotton-weavers, resident in that part of Great Britain called England,

Sheweth,

That your petitioners have for a series of years suffered very great hardships by reduction of their wages.

That such reduction of their wages hath been principally effectuated by the competition or rivalship of the master manufacturers, in paying various prices for the same kind of goods, whereby the skill and industry of your petitioners is sacrificed by a depreciation of the value of their labour.

That your petitioners do not observe any abatement in the demand for goods, though they are reduced nearly one half the wages they have hitherto been paid: and such wages do not, in many cases, amount to more than 9*s*. per week.

That your petitioners have seen the advance of price in other trades and branches of manufacture to

(*t*) Mr. Thos. Myerscough, 15 July 1834. Q. 4389.
(*u*) Mr. Thos. Myerscough, 16 July 1834. Q. 4686, 4687.
(*x*) R. M. Martin, Esq. 11 July 1834. Q. 3886. 4074, 4075.
(*y*) Thomas Worsley, 25 July 1834. Q. 7292–7297.

to correspond with the increased prices of provisions, while they have from the foregoing causes, together with the increased prices of house-rents, firing, and other necessaries attendant upon the manufacture, been rendered incapable of procuring a sufficient livelihood.

That your petitioners are, and ever will be, ready to submit to any privations arising from national calamities, and with becoming fortitude to bear them; but they believe they have nothing to dread either from the arts or arms of foreigners; they therefore look up to the justice and wisdom of this Honourable House for redress in the premises, which they are ready to prove (if so permitted), either by themselves or counsel.

That if a fair and equal regulation were adopted in the trade, and uniformity of prices established for weaving the various fabrics in the cotton manufacture, such manufacture would be rescued from its present competitors, and all concerned therein be much benefited.

Your petitioners, therefore, most humbly pray, that leave may be given to bring in a Bill to regulate, from time to time, agreeable to existing circumstances, the prices for weaving cotton cloth; such prices, rules and regulations, to be uniform and general, for every species, fabric and texture in the said manufacture, or to do herein as to the great wisdom of this Honourable House shall seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray.

The important concerns of the State having rendered it necessary that His Majesty should dissolve the late Parliament, your petition praying for leave to bring in a Bill to regulate an uniform payment of wages for your labour is thereby lost for the present time, and you have thereby been put to considerable expense. Your patriotism and love for your country's welfare will induce you to bear therewith without murmuring, more especially as thereby you will be enabled to raise means to cover the necessary expense, which means (on account of the short time for preparation) was all that remained doubtful. You have now sufficient time both to get forward a numerous petition and procure supplies, as the same will not be presented until the end of the year, and the object is too desirable to be neglected, and will undoubtedly be supported by all who wish well to themselves, their families and the trade. The Bill adopted by the Committee, and designed to be submitted to the Legislature, contains,

1. A power and authority to be vested in the President of the Board of Trade to issue his precept to the high constables of 15 towns or districts, in the counties of Lancaster, Chester, York, and Derby, where the different fabrics of the manufacture are conducted, in obedience to which precept such high constables shall cause meetings to be held of the masters and workmen, each of whom shall choose persons to assemble at Manchester, as the centre of the manufacture, and
2. Such persons so assembled shall have as president the presiding magistrate for the time being; and those who meet shall settle, adjust and regulate the price to be paid for all kinds of cotton cloth, or any article mixed with cotton.
3. A penalty if any constable omits duty.
4. A necessary increase or reduction of price shall be obtained by a petition of a certain number of masters or workmen in the said towns or districts, to the Lord President of the Board of Trade. Any master who shall pay, or workmen who shall receive, more or less wages than shall be thus settled, shall be liable to a penalty, upon conviction before a magistrate, the former 50 *l.*, the latter 10 *l.*, and no appeal.
5. Such prices to be paid and received throughout that part of Great Britain called England, and the principality of Wales.
6. A clause to procure information of offences against the law.
7. A clause to prevent embezzlements, &c. &c.
8. A clause for apprentices, and their number.

The limits of a hand-bill will only allow us to notice the above heads, which probably may undergo considerable alterations from the wisdom of the Legislature, but the principle being admitted, it is not our province to contend about the mode.

It is hoped that every place will put itself into train, that we may be ready against the hour of trial, as we have sufficient time; and we hope every one will lend us a helping hand, as it is every one's common interest. Be that as it may, the money that we have expended cannot be accounted lost, as we have explained to, and made friends of, several of His Majesty's Ministers, and every appearance is in our favour next session.

(Signed on behalf of the Committee) *William Abbott*, President,
William Haworth, Secretary.

Now the above petition and paper show exactly the principle of our petitions, and it is the sentiment of the trade in general. Now this is the cure mentioned in the last clause: "Your petitioners, therefore, most humbly pray, that leave may be given to bring in a Bill to regulate from time to time, agreeable to existing circumstances, the prices for weaving cotton cloth; such prices, rules and regulations to be uniform and general for every species, fabric and texture in the said manufacture, or to do herein as to the great wisdom of this Honourable House shall seem meet." (z)

The foregoing affords a faithful examination of the evidence essentially bearing on the necessity for, and the practicability of, Boards of Trade, or the establishment of a minimum rate of prices; the other evidence relating to the shortening of the hours of labour is so completely absorbed in the preceding questions, and so vaguely set forth, as to require no transcript, while its insertion here would add to the unavoidable prolixity requisite for the due analysis of the matter set before me. I proceed therefore to detail the other remedies suggested for the relief of the hand-loom weavers.

(z) Philip Halliwell, 19 July 1834. Q. 5675–5676.

SECTION 3.—*Taxation of Machinery, or Reduction of Taxation on the Necessaries of Life; Taxation in connexion with the Currency, and also in connexion with the Corn Laws.*

PART III. REMEDIES. Sect. 3. Taxation.

THE evidence under this head is various and complex: it has been shown in Part 2 that machinery is one of alleged causes of the distress existing, and it is therefore proposed to regulate its application by taxing it, and thus make it contribute to the revenue as well as the mere animal machine.

The natural effects of the improvements in machinery should be to reduce the time of labour, and place the work-people in better circumstances, if it was rightly directed; a direction might be given to those improvements that would produce that effect; and that improvement, instead of producing many evils, might be converted into a blessing. Machinery properly used, instead of making men into slaves, would make them comfortable; but every man who works on a machine he is worse than the West Indian negro that the Government have given so humanely his liberty (*a*).

The hand-loom weavers of Leeds remark, Surely relief can be afforded to 800,000 hand-loom weavers. Five years ago we petitioned the House of Commons for a tax on power-looms; our opinion at that time was, that if the duty then paid on printed goods was taken off, which amounted at that time to 500,000 *l.* sterling, and a duty of as much value laid on power-looms, it would be the means of throwing more work into the possession of the hand-loom weavers, and by so doing would give them the means of maintaining themselves and families without encumbering the parish, and the goods would be no dearer to the consumer by so doing. And if the taxes were now taken off soap, oil, wool, cotton, dye-wares, and all other raw materials used in the manufactures, and laid on power-looms, it would have the same effect. It is the duty of the Legislature to protect the weak from being oppressed by the strong; we are the weak, but the power-loom is strong; it takes from us our labour, but it does not contribute its share towards relieving the poverty it creates. It ought to be made more available to local rates, but it unfortunately happens that the persons who have the power to lay the rates are mostly interested in machinery, and, either through custom or interest, consider nothing but the value of the buildings.

Those opposed to taxing machinery, say, if you tax it, it will stop all further improvement, and it will stop machinery; there would be equally as much reason in saying, if bricks be taxed there would be no more brick houses built; or if candles be taxed, that there would be none used, but we should sit in the dark. Again, it is argued, if you tax machinery it will destroy our foreign trade. That was done by the corn laws; in the year 1816, before power-looms became so numerous, there was exported from this country to foreign parts, woollen goods to the value of 5,586,364 *l.* 9 *s.* 9 *d.*, and in six years after the passing of the corn laws, which was in the year 1821, the value of British woollens exported to foreign parts was reduced to 4,363,980 *l.* 15 *s.* 3 *d.*, which is a decrease of 1,222,383 *l.* 14 *s.* 6 *d.* in the export of British woollens alone. In 1816 there was exported to the United States of America British woollens to the value of 2,241,510 *l.* 13 *s.* 11 *d.*, and in 10 years after, our exports to the same place were only 1,220,834 *l.* 19 *s.* 5 *d.* If we had taken their corn in exchange for our goods, the reverse would have been the consequence; and notwithstanding 20 years of profound peace, and all the machinery brought into play, our foreign trade has never regained in value what it was in the years 1816, 1817 and 1818.

We are of opinion that unless a tax be laid on power-looms of 25 per cent. of the wages we receive at present for the same description of work, we shall in a little time be compelled to work for the same wages they do. With our present wages, when in full employment, we can scarcely get the necessaries let alone the comforts of domestic life. What will be our situation then? It cannot be contemplated without horror. Mr. James Green says, in his report to us, that the hand-loom weavers think that their labour ought to be protected as well as the farmer's corn, by a tax on power-looms; we are of the same opinion.

We are, Sir, your most obedient humble servants,

Edward Sunderland, Michael Mahony.

We, the undersigned, having examined the reports from which this document is collected, do believe it to be a correct report of the situation of the stuff weavers of Leeds.

James Green, Eli Whiteley, Joseph Craddock, Samuel Maud (*b*).

George Burges, Esquire, M.A. of Cambridge, who has paid much attention to the subject of machinery, says, My object is to tax machines, according to my definition, not to tax instruments, because it is not the instrument that does mischief, but the machine. We must direct our attention to the marked distinction, both in principle and detail, of animate and inanimate power. If we pursue this inquiry, we shall find that all instruments worked by mere animal power are not, and never have been prejudicial to man in the most rude or in the most civilized state; whereas the introduction of a machine, worked by inanimate power, has in its first stage, as exemplified in the cotton trade, where the machine has been employed in the greatest extent, has, I say, in its first stage, increased profits, which, leading to an influx of capital in the second, has given rise to competition in the third, which, producing a diminished profit in the fourth, has led, in the fifth and last, to the destruction, not only of all profit, but nearly of all the capital embarked; and now similar results cannot be predicated in reference to any instrument worked by human power alone, inasmuch as human power has a limit that imposes a check; it is a part of that check which nature has given to everything, by which all we see and enjoy is regulated; if you once introduce to the limited state of man the unlimited power of inanimate machinery, from that moment are you beginning, although you are not conscious of it, to feel the evil; and therefore my object is, after having obtained a specific difference between animate and inanimate power, or, in other words, between man and the machine, to tax the machine wherever it interferes with man, but to leave it unrestrained where it does not. Any invention in weaving, if man is the mover of it, would meet with my entire approval, but any invention of anything conducted by power, I conceive requires regulation at the hands of the Legislature: because I find that a machine, as defined by myself, has a number of disadvantages which no art can possibly remedy;

(*a*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5591-5593. (*b*) Letter to Edward Baines, Esq., M.P. 13 April 1835.

remedy: and all which disadvantages go to the deterioration of that which is of the greatest importance to man; and that is, the produce of the soil. The machine eats not, drinks not, has no clothing, wants no houses, and consumes no luxuries; but men must eat, must drink, must have clothing, must have houses, and consume luxuries; yet though a machine thus consumes little or nothing it can compete with human labour, and gives nothing in return for it. The machine comes in competition with human labour and only gives this advantage: it cheapens production by cheapening labour; if it cheapened production without cheapening labour, there might be an advantage from it; but in proportion as it cheapens labour it destroys the very power to purchase.

It is my decided opinion, that the use of such an immense power, as the substitution of steam, or any physical power for human, is that it is too dangerous to be permitted without the control of the Legislature. I would tax machinery as a principle, and the detail of the tax may be stated in very few words. Every machine, say one of 20-horse power, is supposed to lose one quarter of that power upon itself, or in overcoming friction, or before there is any available power at all. Thus the machine of 20-horse power is reduced to 15-horse power. I would then take another quarter to indemnify the erector of that machine for the expense he has been at upon it. I would then consider that there is a 15-horse power totally available. Now it is calculated that every horse power is equal to five men, consequently a 10-horse power is a 50-man power available. If, therefore, upon this machine the owner chooses to employ 50 human beings, in Heaven's name let him; he does the State no injury; he has done it a benefit, for he has already expended a certain sum of money on the erection of the machine, and individuals living at Birmingham, or wherever it has been made, have been benefited *pro tanto*; but if he does not employ 50 human beings upon that machine, then he is doing an injury, because he is preventing the application of so much human power. If, therefore, he employs on such a machine only 10 human beings, he shall be taxed for the support of 40 human beings at a certain ratio; if he employs 20 men he shall pay for 30, and so on; but if he employs more than 50, then the State shall give him something. To such a person, I should say, the State does not prevent your having a machine, but it does not allow that, while you are looking to your own individual interest, you shall derive a profit at the sacrifice of others; if you want to make a fortune, make it by employing your fellow creatures, not by leaving them to starve. We all of us come into the world merely with our hands and our head, and no one has a right to prevent another man's gaining his livelihood, nor can he do so if both parties are living in a state of nature, where the soil is the property of the first occupant. But in such a state the introduction of a machine is not possible. We are, however, living in an artificial state, and the whole of our arrangement must be made with reference to that artificial state, taking care however that no one interest is sacrificed to benefit another.

This mode of benefiting the hand-loom weavers appears to me to strike at the very root of the evil; it makes those individuals who are benefited by the introduction of machinery pay for the benefit which they fancy they will obtain by the substitution of the cheap power of the machine for the dear power of man; and there still will be a premium for the erection of the machine; for I should be doing wrong, unless I held out a premium for its erection, I should take away the employment of those who had so erected it; it is but a small premium, but I think quite sufficient to prevent that which would otherwise be the necessary result of the system, the total destruction of machinery; when persons have a number of individuals under them, they are never secure against the idleness of one, and the drunkenness of another, and the effect of strikes and combinations: the individuals who have a machine are released from such evils; as they are thus released from the control of their men, they would still have a sufficient motive for the erection of the machine.

I should tax the steam-engine more than the water-mill, because I can work the steam-engine where I will and when I will; a water-mill must have a fall of water, and I must have the water not only in a particular place, but with particular advantages; that is to say, there must be a fall sufficient to turn a mill; therefore the water-mill has not the same ubiquity, the same universality or advantage that the steam-engine has; therefore I should tax the water-mill less than the steam-engine; now as I have no control whatever over the wind, I must tax that much less, for I must wait till there be a wind, and even over the wind I have less control than I have over water, and less over the water than the steam.

As to the possibility of introducing a tax on machinery in this country, if it shall not be introduced at the same time abroad. I have been abroad, and have examined the countries abroad with the eye of a political economist; and I can assert that there is no part of France where machinery can be established to a hundredth part the extent it can in this. The only parts where it can be established with effect are on the frontiers of Belgium, on the banks of the Sambre and Meuse, and along the Seine and Yone, and even there only partially. When you go beyond Fontainbleau and come upon the high table-land at the head of the Seine, there is no power on earth by which you can establish manufactories, for you are distant from everything in the shape of rivers; there are no canals; it is a very high mountainous country, with no coal, scarcely any wood, and no means of transport. On the frontiers of Switzerland there is a place called Moray, where the finest iron is obtained; but all this iron so obtained, so much superior to that in the neighbourhood of Liege, and scarcely inferior to Swedish iron, is obtained with difficulty, and exported from the place of its manufacture with still more difficulty. If it goes to the Rhone, it must cross the Jura range; or if it goes to the Seine it must travel about 100 miles by land before it can come to water-carriage; and even when it does come to the water, such is the declivity of the rivers there, that as the boats have nothing in the shape of back-carriage, the expense of freight is almost as great as by land. England possesses, from its local position, from the fact of having, in Staffordshire, iron and coal in the same district; and even in Lancashire, where you lose the iron, you get your superior coal; besides, as in some parts there are navigable rivers, and in others navigable canals, you have facilities of transport in this country which no country in the world possesses equally, and therefore any idea of being beaten out by foreign machinery is quite chimerical. There is no part of the world where they can manufacture so well, or where the means of taking produce to its market is equal to that in England; and as to America, the Americans are too wise ever to trouble themselves about manufactures; they have already shown a proof of their wisdom in taxing all our manufactures to a high pitch; and if they chose to compete with us, we could prevent their goods from being brought into England; but, taken as a country, it cannot compete with us. America, by the introduction of steam-boats, is enabled to navigate her large rivers or inland seas. She knows, what the Legislature of this country has yet to learn, that agriculture is the first thing to be attended to by civilized beings. If men do not get food it is in vain to give them cloth; therefore, say the Americans, we will first have our corn and our cattle, and then we will devote the surplus of our capital to draw forth luxuries from other nations.

They tax our manufactures because they know that, possessing the facilities England does, she can make cloths, cottons and everything they want in the shape of clothing (which I will consider almost a necessary), and everything in the shape of luxuries, cheaper than they can. They say the English want our corn, but we do not want their cloths; so much therefore they shall buy our corn at the dearest rate. We do not prohibit their receiving our corn, but we will not receive their manufactures, except at an increased rate, because we would rather employ our own people to produce as much as they can for ourselves. We thus gain, they say, both by England being the market for our corn, and not being the maker of all our cloths. We, say they, will purchase English manufactures only when we cannot produce that which England can; and so are the French doing at the present moment.

At the present moment, when the President of the Board of Trade says he hopes to be able to persuade the French government to permit power-loom cloths to be introduced into France, he knows, or ought to know, that the French will take as much of our yarn as they can get, but they will not take from us more of our cloth than just to satisfy the wine growers of the south, without injuring the manufactures of the north of France.

In reference to the question, if a manufacturer can manufacture at a less cost where the necessaries of life are cheapest, cannot the manufacturers in France manufacture at less cost than they can here?—If it be meant to confine the question to manual labour, where manual labour is cheapest the goods will be cheapest; but if I am to give an opinion of the produce from a regard to inanimate power, there is something new enters into the consideration, and we must ascertain what proportion that something new bears to the whole question. Let there be two countries where the wants of the population are different, arising from the difference of the temperature of the climate, then I say, the individuals whose wants are the fewest will be induced to offer their labour for a less sum than where their wants are greater, and that therefore, under such circumstances, if both parties choose to manufacture where the labour is cheapest, there will the profit be greatest. But there is something in human nature at variance with the calculations of political economy. Individuals in hot climates, we know, are very unwilling to labour at all; therefore, in the south of France people are not disposed to labour to the extent they do in the north of Europe, where the difference renders labour necessary, and a greater compulsion to exertion neutralizes the advantage the people of the south have, arising from natural causes.

In answer to the suppositious case, that five machines introduced by five weavers will interfere with the labour of five other weavers wanting such machines, and who do not contribute so much as the five power-looms can; in that case I would not destroy the machines, supposing the Legislature compelled the 95 to make up to the other five any deficiency in the command of the comforts of life which those five hand-loom weavers would be deprived of from the introduction of those machines; and in reference to the question, is it not the want of protection, then, to those whose labour is interfered with, and reduced in value by the introduction of machinery, that may more justly be complained of than the use of the machinery?—The protection and the use are, in this particluar case, almost correlative terms; the effect would be the same whether the producing power of the machine be stopped, or whether, if the machine be permitted to go on, the parties thrown out of employ by its operation be supported. In the one case, if the five hand-loom weavers were compelled to go on, the benefit would be divided partly amongst the possessors of the machines, and partly amongst the other 90 individuals, but the whole loss would fall on the unfortunate five; therefore, with reference to the act of legislation, it would become a question whether you should support the five, or arrest the machine. If it should appear that more mischief would arise by supporting those five in a state of idleness, then would a wise Legislature stop the machine; if, on the other hand, it should appear that, by supporting those five in idleness, not only they individually suffered less, while the other 95 gained more, then ought they to be so supported. I think, however, it will be found better to employ them moderately than to permit them to be idle; and as it is detrimental to society to compel people to be worked to death, the question whether you are to introduce the correcting power, either by paying a tax on machines, or by supporting the individuals, is a question of plus or minus; it does not affect the principle. As soon as the Legislature interferes, it must do so by some positive enactment, to arrest the competition of the machine; and whether it be arrested by a direct tax on its use, or an indirect one, as on the period of using it, the effect, in principle, is the same, however different it may be in detail. In the case of the five weavers who possess the machines, it is supposed that they are unwilling to communicate the secret of their machinery to the other five weavers; but if the five were willing to reduce the hours of labour of the whole 10, by communicating to the other five the advantages of the machine, would not the result be to reduce the labour of the 10 from 12 to six hours a day; and would not such reduction of labour be beneficial?—I say it would be an advantage or not, precisely as you have or have not some occupation for that idle time. That would be certainly a question of quantity, not a question between the existence of labour and no labour at all; it does not touch any principle that is a matter of detail.

In the case of 10 weavers, in a community of 100, the introduction of such machines would not be an evil; whether I put a stop to them in toto or partially will depend upon other considerations. If, by preserving the machine, it were found that it tended to produce idleness, and all its concomitant evils, to the weavers, or to lower the value of labour in the other 95, I might be disposed to stop it in toto; but if I discovered that it was better only to have the machine partially worked, I should regulate it accordingly, by putting a tax upon machinery, and by so doing take out of the market its competition with human power, or by limiting the period of its use. The question, however, is not so much whether the machine be worked a certain length of time, but whether it has a tendency to make the supply greater than the demand, both as regards what is produced by such machinery, and as regards the labour market.

In the case which has been supposed, viz. that I would not destroy the five machines introduced by the five weavers, but would protect the five other weavers who suffered in consequence of the introduction of that machine, by making the 95 persons support those five; but supposing the five machines make 10 pieces a week, and the five weavers make but five pieces a week, and the community would consume, if they could get them, 15 pieces instead of 10, in that case the five weavers with the power-looms, and the five weavers with the hand-looms, would be still in employment; in such case I should compare the sum received respectively by the five hand-loom weavers and the five machine weavers; and if I found that the value of the produce of the five hand-loom weavers was greater, which is impossible under such circumstances, for five hand-loom

weavers could not gain, by the making of five pieces, as much as the other five would by the making of 10, I should compel those who have received the benefit directly to help to the support of those whose labour they diminished by such means; but I would not compel them to pay it all, because the other 90 would be benefited by the diminished price of the article, and therefore the correct plan would be to make the whole 95 pay for the diminution arising from the introduction of the machine; but as those who produce by the machine are paid perhaps more than is the purchaser of the cloth, by the reduction in its price, justice would require that each party should pay in the ratio of the benefit received; but that would be a very nice calculation to enter into, what is received plus by the power-loom weavers, and what proportion is paid minus by the consumer at this reduced price. The State must, however, step in and give to the hand-loom weavers such a sum as should bring them up to the level of the power-loom weavers. I would, as a legislator, avoid the destruction of the machinery, and leave it to have its operation on society; but would take care that the five hand-loom weavers did not suffer from its introduction; to me it is a matter of perfect indifference whether you destroy the machine or make it pay for the mischief it does; it is a mere question of detail whether it is better for the five people to be left in idleness; it does not touch the principle at all. You must make up to the hand-loom weavers a sum equivalent to that received by those who have the benefit of the machine.

The opinion is not fallacious, that machinery, which has increased production from 10 pieces to 15, is an evil; if the society want 15 pieces, and they can obtain only 10 by hand-looms, that is a premium for labour; and in order to obtain the 15 pieces, the 10 weavers must either work a greater length of time than they did antecedently, or some other hands must be brought into the trade, by importing labour, precisely as other goods are, if wanted, imported. If you require hands, you must supply that want either by the import of hands, or by what is equivalent to hands, the introduction of machinery, and which two powers differ from each other only as the one is animate and the other inanimate power. I have stated distinctly, that machinery, under certain circumstances, is an advantage; under other circumstances it is a disadvantage; and it is a mere question of detail whether it is the one or the other. I am not going to predicate that machinery is, in toto, destructive, but that it is so under particular circumstances. It results from my answer, that the existence of machinery is not *per se* an evil, but that, in a community such as ours, our wishes should tend to the regulation of this power; that, under certain circumstances, the increased power of production might be productive of evil, that, under other circumstances, the abandonment of machinery might be also productive of evil; I would retain the power, but regulate its application. And if all the individuals in the community could agree on that most beneficial to the community, they would retain the power, and would foster every new invention which could abridge human labour, but would regulate the application of it. I want the power, but I want it regulated.

There is a tax on railroads at present, the railroad carriage is taxed; to me it is a matter of perfect indifference, *quoad* the machinery, whether the railroad or the carriage be taxed. I apprehend that while the stage-coach proprietor is taxed for his carriage, and he has the keep of his horses and his other expenses to pay, there ought to be a tax on the railroad, or the carriage driven along it, to equalize the burdens of transport. I do not propose to tax the machines with reference to a principle; but to the justice of the tax and expediency combined; they ought to be taxed where they have a tendency to diminish the amount of employment of human labour; you cannot apply abstract principles to every passing event of life; abstract principles do very well in geometry, but not in political economy. In so far as the railroads displace so many coachmen and guards, and so on, I would tax them. I do not tax railroads while they are making; but as the object of the railroad is to drive off, as the Manchester railroad did, all the coaches previously running, and as the railroads thus expect to get a benefit at the expense of other interests, it is fitting that it should give something to the State in return for such benefits. On the same principle, at the suspension of cash payments, Mr. Pitt should have let the nation participate in the advantages the Bank derived from such a step, by compelling it to pay annually a sum bearing some proportion to its profits. So with regard to the railroad, the moment it begins to benefit itself at the expense of others, you must in justice either take off the taxes on stage-coaches, or impose equal taxes on the railroad; but do not load one with a weight from which the other is free. Divide the taxation between the two; it is unfair in principle towards the coach proprietor to tax the passenger alone who travels by steam-coach, when you tax the proprietor whether he has a passenger or not. With regard to persons travelling down the Thames by steam. Of course I should not tax persons going by wind, because they do not throw out any animate power; I would not tax a vessel going across the Atlantic by steam, because it does not throw one atom of animal power out of employ; the steam-boat can go against wind and tide; no vessel can go against wind and tide; if the wind and tide be against the vessel it must stop; it consequently does not always interfere with the sailing of other vessels.

The steam-boat requires fewer hands to navigate her; but if you can do that which others cannot do, it is quite obvious it is not doing an injury; an injury is done only when one thing does that which another thing can do. When, however, inanimate power has such an advantage that animate has not, you are not justified in throwing the inanimate out of employment. The navigating inland rivers throws horses out of work. Then I would tax it. A number of coachmen and horses were thrown out of employ by the travelling on the railroad; for that very reason it ought to be taxed, from the loss arising from the produce of the soil in the shape of oats, hay, straw, and everything else connected with it. So that though no great injury is sustained from the Manchester and Liverpool railroad, it is the beginning of a system which must be ultimately productive of ruin. As to its effect in equalizing the value of land, and increasing the value, I know quite enough of Lancashire to say you cannot, unless you allow my system of human labour and manure, make the Moors of Lancashire so productive as some parts of Derbyshire, or the loomy grounds of Sussex. Nature has said, you shall not make the northern parts of Europe as fertile as some of the more southern ones. There are various ways of rendering machinery less an evil, or more a blessing, than it is at present; such as by either restricting the time during which it should be allowed to work, or putting a tax upon it, or making the parties, either the owner of the machine, or the public who derive benefit from it in some way or other, compensate the individuals who are the sufferers by restoring to them a compensation for the loss that they are made to sustain for the benefit of the community (*c*).

If the hand-loom is to maintain the struggle against the power which is not taxed, the hand-loom weaver must abandon taxed articles, and resort ultimately to the lowest minimum of subsistence which

(*c*) G. Burges, Esq. A.M, 23 July 1834. Q. 6931–6974. 6978–7004.

which an Irishman perhaps now is subjected to, butter-milk and potatoes, and that in proportion as he lowers down his means of subsistence to articles that exempt him from taxation, in proportion he reduces the profit of the power-loom, but he does so at his own cost; but if, on the contrary, the same taxes were paid by the cloth that comes from the power-loom, as by the cloth that comes from the hand-loom, the price of power-loom cloth would be raised, and the price of hand-loom weavers' cloth would rise in the same proportion (*d*).

William Longson says, it would be a good thing, as well as a just thing, if each piece of cloth that was brought into the market, whether produced by power-loom or hand-loom, should contribute exactly the same to the taxes of the country. It should, I think, as the pieces of cloth they produce for the foreigner or for the home consumer are at an equal price; that if an equal price is obtained, I see no reason, if it can be justly done, why the one should not pay an equal proportion of taxation as the other (*e*).

Thus for the evidence in favour of taxing machinery; but the witness who made the remark contained in the above paragraph observes,—With reference to the propriety of taxing the power-loom part of machinery, as the means of raising the price of the cloth it produces to the extent that it escapes taxation, by putting a tax to the amount that falls upon the hand-loom weaver while working the time necessary to produce the same quantity of cloth, I have had, in some instances, my attention turned that way, but for anything I can see the tax would fall upon the operatives engaged at the power-loom, and the wages are not great. With regard to the principle of extending the principle further, I will put it hypothetically, that supposing by miracle or machinery I should supersede all human labour, what is to be done with the persons whose labour I have superseded? The world was not made for me and my machinery, and in that case what extremities would the Legislature be put to? By supposing the most extreme case, I have put it to extremities in the last supposition, that it may be more easily grappled with. The effects on the productive classes from a tax on machinery would be I should suppose that the tax put upon machinery would fall upon the operatives engaged upon the machines in the first place; I see no means of evading it. My reasons for entertaining that opinion are, because the employers fix the rate of wages, some by necessity, and some by their own mere power; and as it is both by necessity and by power, I should think that eventually it would be declared by those who engaged labourers that in consequence of such a tax they could only give a certain rate, and would diminish in proportion to that. The operation of a tax upon machinery, whereby the cost of production would be enhanced, would either raise the price of the article manufactured in that way, or, in that case, fall upon the operator working at the machine; in my opinion it would fall upon the operative at the machine. With respect to the question whether the master of the power-loom will always be in a different situation from the employer of the hand-loom weaver, in so far as the power-loom, while it stands still, is a dead loss to him, whereas the standing still of the hand-loom is no such thing; the putting a tax upon the power-loom would not prevent the master employing the weavers, nor reduce their wages, because it being a disagreeable trade, the weavers, if their circumstances were raised and improved, would go back to the hand-loom if he tried to reduce their wages?—It would have some tendency that way, undoubtedly, in case there was an attempt at any reduction of the wages. In the power-loom weaving department there are many who are hand-loom weavers, and of course various inducements to reduce wages exist, and the necessity of standing during the whole employment would be one very great inducement that might cause them to return to manual labour. The extent they might be liable to do so would probably be the difference of taxation that falls upon a yard of cloth made in a hand-loom, and which is not paid to the same extent upon the cloth made in the power-loom; but by operating upon the competition of the two, we cannot always calculate with numerical accuracy; there it might be to a greater extent than might at first sight appear. However, morally speaking, any two persons who are in competition with each other as labourers ought to pay exactly the same taxation. If the Legislature was to do no more than to place the hand-loom and power-loom weaver in the same circumstances, or the manufacturer who employs the hand-loom, and the manufacturer who employs the power-loom, in the same situation in regard to the tax, nothing more would be done than what was strictly just; I should think it very desirable and very just, if practicable; but my duty obliges me to doubt the practicability of it. In my opinion, the laying a tax upon the power-loom would have the effect of reducing the wages of the power-loom weavers; it would immediately fall upon the power-loom weavers. I am aware that there is a great tax imposed upon human power; that is, upon the power of the weaver, as produced by the arms and sinews of the weavers; general taxation operates upon him. If there was an equivalent tax upon steam-power, you would then bring the competition between the two to the same level; it would equalize it. When a machine, by escaping taxes, enables its owner to produce articles so much cheaper as the evasion of the taxes permits him to do, and thereby to undersell the person who employs manual labour altogether, that in order to let the employer of manual labour be able to give as good wages as the employer of mechanical labour, the Legislature should at least make them amenable to the same taxation. If goods are bought in any market whatsoever, they are not produced by creation, but by labour of some kind, and if there is a displacing of manual labour, and the goods are brought in of an equal quality, equally useful to all the purposes of mankind and human desire, I can see nothing unfair in making the one equally liable to taxation with the other, if practicable; with regard to the practicability, I leave that to your consideration. Supposing a machine were invented that would very much reduce manual labour, would you be at the cost and expense of bringing that machine into operation, if the consequence necessarily must be, that you must pay a tax equivalent to the importance of the invention?—I should think not; I should say decidedly not, if it was equal to that. But, on the other hand, allow me to make an allusion to the remark I made before, pushing the supposition to an extremity; how would it be in the case of some machine, supposing I had an inventive capacity and could carry it into effect, so as to supersede all human labour, and produce all the objects of human desire, must I tell mankind in general, in the language of an author I need not name, "That there is no vacant corner for them; they must retire, or nature will very soon execute her own purposes."

Three or 400 years ago there were no printed books; it would not have been for the benefit of society to have laid a tax upon printing presses to such an extent that all books should have continued to have been written instead of printed. I say decidedly not; but the persons who were scribes

(*d*) Richard Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5601.

(*e*) William Longson, 22 July 1834. Q. 6753.

scribes at that time had been taken by society, and were convenient to society; they had learned that occupation; and would it not have been fair and reasonable that they should have been remunerated? might they not have given them pensions because they had learnt a trade to serve you? and what right have you to tell them to go into the grave, or into oblivion, or whatever you call it? If you do not think proper to tax the printing press, the society who are benefited by it ought to compensate the scribes. If you lay hold of a boy and make him a blacksmith to shoe horses; if you get a machine to do it, you have deprived mankind of the benefit of that man's labour; you have confined him to that kind of employment, and why not remunerate him? you may call it a tax or a pension. I would only compensate him till he was able to find some other mode of employment. I would stop no improvement. If I could produce all the objects of human desire by a machine, I should think it my duty to God and to man, to appeal to the State, and say, how are these men to be lodged and clothed, whose labour must be superseded by the introduction of my machine.

Whatever may have been the influence and effect of machinery acting in competition with the labourers, who pay heavy taxes to the State, the best mode by which relief can be given to the hand-loom weavers, is some regulation which will prevent the avaricious or improvident manufacturer from reducing the price of weaving, not with reference to the demand of the consumers, not with reference to the price that his commodity could be sold at, but with reference alone to the misery and wretchedness of the weavers, which compel them to take any wages that any person may choose to give them (*f*).

As to the same degree of taxation being meted out to every description of capital or labour, or whether performed in a greater or less degree by the aid of mechanical power, in cases where it shall appear by means of the evasion of those taxes to be able to work at a lower rate, and consequently to bring down the rate of other capital and labour less able to evade that taxation which the mechanical power, under the present system, is able to do. It is my opinion that wherever a tax is imposed it always falls upon the shoulders of the labourer and if any kind of machinery were taxed, the direct tendency of that tax would be to reduce the wages of the persons attending upon that machinery, and also it would tend to repress it; it is by improvements in machinery by which alone our manual labour can be lightened.

If, however, two people commenced brewing porter or ale, and the Government taxes the one and not the other, the one will unquestionably undersell and bring the other down to the level at which he can work, without paying the tax. That must hold good with regard to every thing taxed that is allowed to come into competition with that which is not taxed (*g*).

Mr. *Myerscough* observes, With reference to the cloth made by the power-loom contributing in the same degree to the revenue as the cloth made by hand-loom, I should be very sorry for myself to see any tax put on power, believing as I do, that it will not have the slightest effect to improve the condition of the hand-loom weaver. I should like to see the hand-loom weavers relieved from many of the taxes now collected. I should doubt that taxing the loom would raise the price of power-loom cloth, it might certainly interfere very materially with the manufacturer of power-loom cloth, but I am not aware that it would very materially raise the price, so as to afford the hand-loom weavers any benefit (*h*).

Mr. *Oastler* is of opinion that it is very injurious to tax machinery, but I think it is still more injurious to allow machinery to pine the operatives to death. I think it would be a dangerous experiment to tax machinery: but still if nothing else can be done so as to increase the price of labour, that must be done, because the labourer will not submit to be starved much longer; but I do not think that taxing machinery would be a wise legislative measure; I think it would be taxed sufficiently if the time of its work were shortened; I think that would be the best way of taxing them; I think that you ought to have only one tax, but I do not want to increase taxes; I do not think any good will be done by increasing taxes, but if nothing else can be done to enable the labourer to get a living, I see no other way but to resort to taxing machinery. I certainly should say, that if Parliament refuse to shorten the hours of labour, there is no other way of enabling the hand-loom weavers to live but by fixing a tax upon the produce of the power-loom, so as to enable them to compete with the power-looms; but I prefer the shortening of the hours of labour to those new taxations. I should say that what we want principally is to check the dreadful power of capital, and that the reduction of the taxes, or of provisions, would not cure the evil we are complaining of. On this subject I should mention an anecdote which occurred to myself: I went into a place where there were a number of carpenters, and they told me that they were better off when mutton and bread was dear, and that they found that labourers were not at all benefited by the reductions; and unless you can check the power of capital, I do not think that labourers will be benefited one penny a year, since, as soon as ever the taxes are taken off, the capitalist says to the weaver, you must do me so much more work for so much less money: and that is the settlement of all the accounts; that I have found to be the opinion of the operatives generally speaking, and thus they are dropping the names of radicals, whigs and tories; they say they are oppressed by capital, and that they would not be benefited if all the taxes were taken off, and if the corn was half the price, they would have to do so much more work in comparison of what they now do, unless the law protected their labour (*i*).

It is evident that the cloth made by machinery contributes in a much less degree to the resources of the country than that produced by the hand-loom, and that consequently until that inequality of taxation is removed, it would be just to make both of them contribute equally to the resources of the country; indeed, it would not only be just, but what I am sorry to say is often not just, it would be politic. I do not however say tax machinery, I should be sorry to tax machinery *per se*, but tax capital, that would come to the same thing and answer every good purpose; I would not put a tax on steam-boats or steam-carriages, &c., for such measures check human improvement and human energy (*k*).

In opposition to the project for taxing machinery, it is proposed by several witnesses to remove as much as possible the taxes which press on the productive industry of the country:—

Mr. *Myerscough* says, I think no board of trade can relieve the weavers as long as the pressure of taxation exists upon them. I know, before the duty on salt was taken off, it cost me, when I got a pig

(*f*) W. Longson, 24 July 1834. Q. 7061–7076. 7089–7084. 7097. (*h*) Mr. T. Myerscough, 15 July 1834. Q. 4374, 4375.
(*g*) Mr. John Makin, 18 July 1834. Q. 5284. 5291, 5292. (*i*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3845.
(*k*) R. Montgomery Martin, Esq. 11 July 1834. Q. 3996, 3997.

pig salted at my relations, 5 *s.*; now if any tax-gatherer should come and cut 10 lbs. of bacon off the side a man had in his house, he would look very queer at him. The malt tax being taken off would relieve them. The mode of relief I would suggest would be to reduce the taxes from 50,000,000 *l.* to 10,000,000 *l.* or 12,000,000 *l.* In case that cannot be effected, I know of no other mode of relief which presents itself to my mind that is practicable (*l*).

Mr. *Oastler* remarks, I think that if you take away all indirect taxes, and lay a tax upon property and capital, making capital first pay up its arrears of taxation, you would set matters right. An enormous mass of capital has not a single sixpence of taxes to pay anywhere (*m*).

Mr. *Montgomery Martin* says, I would consider it a much more healthy state of society if some means could be adopted to raise the value of labour in this country, and thereby increase the power of consumption among the labouring people to a degree which would render us much less dependent on foreign trade than we now are. I do not, however, think that the wages of labour can be raised by legislative enactment; they must regulate themselves, not only in England, but in contiguous countries, as long as we are at peace, and instead of endeavouring to raise the wages of labour, I would endeavour to take off those burthens which press upon the British labourer, and to enable him to compete fairly with the foreigner.

Capital, like manure, ought to be equally distributed, and not collected in great masses, if the greatest possible public good is contemplated in the financial system of the country. I recommend a property tax, as having a tendency to correct that mal-administration in the affairs of this country, which appears by the increase of probate duties to have led to masses of great wealth, while the great mass of the population have been reduced to great misery and distress. I think the removal of taxes which affect the industry of the country, and the levying of a tax on the wealth of the country, levied according to the means of each portion of the community, would have saved the necessity of this Committee, and those further labours to which this will lead with respect to the productive classes (*n*).

If British subjects who spend their incomes abroad were made to contribute to the taxation which their incomes are subjected to while they remained at home, it would be beneficial to the country in relieving it of a part of those taxes which every person in Britain must pay, and also in the additional employment of British labour, and an additional market for British productions, that the expenditure of their income in this country would naturally procure (*o*).

I am not an advocate for keeping up a tax of 50 millions a year; but I am a strong advocate for maintaining the national faith. We are bound to continue raising 28,000,000 *l.* annually for the payment of the interest on the debt; but by removing the pressure off the labouring classes, I would hope to raise up those classes to their proper state in society. With reference to the question of preventing the taxation falling on the labourer, seeing that labour is the spring and source of all other property. The poorest man in the State must pay his proportion of the taxation of the State, for his labour is dependent on the security of the country from foreign aggression and for internal tranquillity; that all taxation under my proposed system would fall on the labour of the country, I deny; it would fall in proportion on dormant accumulated property in which labour had ceased to be employed.

I have no doubt from the consideration given to this subject, that if the taxes on the articles of consumption named were very materially reduced it would not only give relief to the labouring classes, but it would very materially tend to improve and extend the trade of the country. It would have the effect of giving such relief to this country as when a man is labouring under a severe fever, and there is an immense quantity of blood oppressing him, the abstraction of that gives the man a sort of relief which has often been described to me as if the sufferer were translated to heaven; I think the relief of this country from the taxes which bear on the productive classes and on the consumption of the bulk of the community, would be equivalent to making this nation tenfold greater than ever she has been.

I have advocated a property tax, not because I am in favour of it, but because I see no other means of getting at present out of our difficulties; if a property tax were laid on we might then be enabled to reduce, not annihilate, the taxes which bear on articles which enter the consumption of the bulk of the people; as an illustration I take the article of sugar, on which nearly 5,000,000 *l.* is at present raised, and I find that the consumption of sugar is but five ounces per week for each individual in the United Kingdom; now by reducing the tax on that article alone, and at the same time extending the market of supply, which has I apprehend been always forgotten in reducing duties, 14,000,000 *l.* would be more easily collected on the article than 4,000,000 *l.* is at present: therefore do I hold that the imposition of a property tax would probably be only for temporary purposes, until the elasticity of the country had enabled the population, intelligent, enlightened and industrious as they are, to recover their natural order of things.

That 10,000,000 *l.* of taxes might be immediately struck off from the finances of this country is to me perfectly clear; I would substitute for it a tax on the funds, a tax on 20,000,000 *l.* invested in East India securities, and on Bank property, on every particle of dormant capital; and instead of checking machinery, or checking freedom of trade, I would then give every possible stimulus to it, believing as I do that extended commerce removes want, that competency removes ignorance, and that the spread of knowledge is virtue and happiness. I do not think it just that the rental of land shall be united in this system of taxation, there being already a tax levied; in England, land already bears a proportion of direct taxation which houses, manufactories, &c., above a certain rank, should also do most certainly. I would make property amenable in a greater degree to support the taxation of the country than it at present does, and by that means relieve labour from those burthens which render the employment of it less productive to farmers, manufacturers, and merchants for the security of property itself: I hold that property in this country has become daily more and more insecure from the distressed state of the people, and that finally (may it be averted) physical power will be brought into operation.

My

(*l*) Mr. T. Myerscough, 15 July 1834. Q. 4577–4580.
(*m*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3825.
(*n*) Mr. R. Montgomery Martin, 11 July 1834. Q. 4027. 3966, 3967.
(*o*) Mr. John Makin, 18 July 1834. Q.5390.

My opinion is, that if the principle of direct taxation were admitted by the Legislature it should be levied, although perhaps differing in amount both upon real property and income derived from precarious sources. That would be the fairest mode of levying it. No other objection occurs to my mind against such a system of taxation, to a certain extent at least, in a country where it is necessary to raise in some manner so large an amount, except the inquisitorial nature or character of such a tax; an objection that if possible I would like to see avoided; but in every thing in this world it is merely a choice of evils, and though we may have good in a system, evil is inseparably blended with it; therefore in adopting the principle of a direct tax, I would say it was an evil we cannot avoid; but I see no other objection to it, nor indeed is inquisitorialness a paramount objection, as an income tax exists in other parts of the empire, where no objection is made to its inquisitorial character. Indeed the objections which have been so strongly urged against a tax on income on account of its inquisitorial character, ought not to outweigh the just consideration of equally apportioning the burthens of a country so heavily taxed as this, according to the means of those who have to pay them. I do not think they ought to weigh for an instant against that State necessity which is paramount to every private consideration; and those who contend for the advantages of concealing the amount of a tax levied, may remember the Shakespearian expression, "He that is robbed, not knowing what is stolen, let him not know it, and he is not robbed at all." I do not, however, see any justification for concealing from a man the amount of taxation he pays, any more than I do the propriety of the robber privily extracting the money from his purse.

I believe that the excessive taxation levied on articles of prime necessity consumed by the labouring classes, is the main cause of the distressed condition of the labouring classes in this country. From an extensive examination into the state of society, and from a comparison between this country and every other part of the globe I have visited, I think that the physical and moral deterioration now taking place among the labouring population of this country is owing mainly to excessive taxation pressing on the articles required for the daily support of life; and superadded to this cause is our imperfect monetary system, depriving the body politic of a sufficient circulating medium. Removing 10, 12 or 15 millions of taxes from articles of the greatest necessity, entering into the consumption of the labouring and middle classes, and levying the amount so removed in an equitable manner upon the property and income of the wealthier classes, in a fair and just proportion, would have the effect of materially improving not only the condition of the labouring classes, but of all other classes in the community. I believe it would renovate the social fabric; I believe it would cause the diffusion of our commerce to an immense extent; we should be able to compete with foreigners in their own market, instead of being excluded, as we now are becoming, from most of the channels of our foreign commerce: the French, the Germans, and even the Russians, are competing with us in markets of which we had conceived we had a monopoly; they are underselling us in cottons, in woollens, and in hardware; and if we go on with the present system, we shall lose the greater part, if not the total, of our foreign commerce, and be undersold even in our own colonies. As regards the higher classes, whatever affects the base of the pyramid, the million, intimately affects the condition of the higher classes, and I hold that the condition of the higher classes of this country, and their prosperity and happiness, is intimately interwoven with that of the poorest labourer in the country, and I really believe the higher classes in this country feel an intense interest in the welfare of the lower classes. The plan I propose would not finally take from the higher classes any proportion of their incomes; a small proportion abstracted at present would be returned with tenfold interest. One of its effects would be to increase the security and thereby improve the value of property, which is in my opinion rendered insecure by reason of the discontent, dissatisfaction and distress of the bulk of the community. It would have most materially the effect of removing a considerable portion of the excitement and dissatisfaction prevailing in this country so generally among the labouring classes. It would give to England a healthy tone of society; it would give her a better, a more moral, a more religious population; and it would raise her higher and higher than she has ever been yet among the kingdoms of the earth; such is my firm conviction. A powerful argument in considering the question of a property or income tax, is, that you cannot by any other means tax the income of fundholders or the property of absentees; but it is not the sole argument; my main principle being a better equalization of the public burthens; the miser at present escapes taxation as much as the fundholder or the absentee. A more just and equal distribution of the public burthens amongst all classes of persons in this country, levied upon the principle of each of these classes contributing as far as may be in proportion to their means, rather than by the present system of taxation levied upon the necessaries of life, is one, if not the principal, of those means by which the Legislature ought to seek the improvement of the labouring classes. The Legislature ought immediately to relieve the working classes by the proposed income and property tax; I believe that to be one of the chief means by which relief may be afforded to this country. I look on boards of trade and other things as temporary expedients, as useful so far as a plank or spar is to a drowning man (*p*).

Connected with the foregoing evidence is the question of the corn laws.

Mr. *Longson*, in reference to the query: Do you consider that the tax upon foreign corn, and all the other taxes that affect you, are the real causes of your sufferings; or do you still, after having had them called to mind, ascribe the sufferings of the weaver to that unprincipled reduction that prevails so much in the manufacturing districts? Answered, I must state that with great positiveness and earnestness, that, all other circumstances remaining the same, suppose there was no tax, suppose there was no corn law, I do not conceive that the condition of the weaver would be the least remedied at all. It would be said by those who have not been improperly termed grinders; "We will offer you less." They will give us less and less, till the weavers and other classes would not have a potatoe a year more by the alteration. It would be taken up by this heartless competition, and the advantage thrown away upon foreigners upon the Continent; and as regards those manufacturing gentlemen of Manchester and those places, who contend that there is no other mode of relieving the distress of the weaver whatever, except by a free trade in corn, I am quite confident it could not give the relief, and I think it may be demonstrated (*q*).

Philip Halliwell says:—With respect to the present system of the corn laws, I happen to differ very materially from the prevailing opinions upon these subjects. There are two extremes amongst us; the manufacturers in the general way would not care a straw if they had the labour of the agriculturist

(*p*) R. M. Martin, Esq., 11 July 1834. Q. 3916–3933. (*q*) William Longson, 22 July 1834. Q. 6869–6872.

rist for nothing; and, on the other hand, the agriculturist would not care a straw if the manufacturer was to clothe him for nothing. Those are two extremes, and I contend that the duty of Parliament is to split the difference; and to make them both just. I mean that legislative interference should be interposed to prevent the one from destroying the other. It is the greatest madness in the world to neglect the home trade in order to cultivate a foreign trade, which produces no profit. And as respects the agriculturists I think it is the soundest policy for a State to make itself independent of foreigners, particularly for the article of bread. Whether it be from the county-rates and the tithes, and the taxes, rather than from any other cause, that the price of bread is so much dearer in this country, than it is to foreign weavers, I always consider, as far as the tithe is considered, that every gentleman or nobleman that holds his land, holds it subject to that incumbrance, and that to repeal the tithes will not be any real advantage to the people; that in all cases where the tithe is redeemed, the land naturally rents higher; and suppose there was a general system of repealing the tithe, the benefit of that system, except the corn laws were repealed at the same time, would naturally fall into the hands of the land-owner, and would not benefit the operative in any way whatever. There ought to be a protecting duty laid upon all corn imported. I think the agriculturist ought to be protected: the land-owner, the farmer and the labourer; and I think also the attention of the Government should be drawn to protect me as a manufacturer. I found, upon the protection given to all those kinds of property, my claim that my labour should have the same protection given to it (*r*).

Richard Needham remarks, that if the corn laws were to be repealed, unless some such measure as have been applied for in petitions be adopted, the hand-loom weavers of Bolton would not benefit by the repeal. No, not by one farthing, excepting a law was to take place that was to secure the present wages we have. If they were to repeal all the taxes in the country, it would not do us one farthing of good: not that I am a friend to taxation; I am a friend to economy and moderation in all things; but if we could live upon a shilling a day, the system would take care we did not get 9*d.* to live upon; that is my idea, and all those I associate with. The circumstance of 280,000 weavers and all their households enjoying a competence to purchase the necessaries of life and the comforts of life would better the situation of the landed interest; we should consume more clothing; we should consume more butcher's meat and more corn of all descriptions, and that would cause a reaction favourable to the agricultural interests of the country, and it would react again upon us in the same ratio; it would be a common blessing (*s*).

John Lennon says:—Supposing that by an alteration of the corn laws we could buy our food one-third cheaper, but that the present system of competition should go on, the weaver would derive very little benefit from the reduction of the price of food. I do not think we can derive any benefit unless we were protected by a minimum rate of wages, or by some system of uniformity of prices; a reduction of provisions would be very little interest to us; we could purchase very little, for the trade would be still declining (*t*).

John Scott asserts:—If you reduce taxation, I have no doubt but there will be a very great benefit accrue to the working classes; but then I think that the state of trade has come to such a pitch that the manufacturer would do all he could to turn the profit into his own pocket. If we had no power-looms, if the manufacturer could not produce the articles which he would send to the foreigner by power, then indeed it would increase the demand for labour: but take the corn laws off, and the power-loom manufacturer will do all he can to increase his machinery to that extent that those goods may be manufactured at the lowest possible price at which they could be obtained. The manufacturer would exchange his cheap goods, upon which no manual labour was performed, with the foreigner, and would receive corn in return; and thereby he would become a twofold monopolist.

With reference to the question, whether it would be any advantage to the British weavers to gain the inhabitants of Poland as customers, if they lost as customers the labourers of the farmers of England?—I conceive that home consumption ought to be looked at first; for if the agricultural labourers of the kingdom were well clad with our manufactures, it would turn to our profit more than if we supplied the Poles. The agricultural labourers and the farmers of England cannot be well clad and use the goods that we weave, unless they have a remunerating price for their labour and their produce (*u*).

With reference to the abolition of the corn laws, it would be most unjust to a man who had invested his property in land under the faith of these restrictions, to abolish them without taking off those burdens which press upon him; and I am not one of those who suppose that a great and most valuable interest of this country, the landed interest, should be pulled down for the sake of some mere chimera, which it could not but be, if the present system of taxation were continued (*x*).

Mr. *Burges*, while advocating the necessity of the corn laws, says: I think a fixed tax ought not to be imposed, for you can never depend upon the amount to be grown where the expense is to be the same. You may have two harvests, a good one and a bad one, in two successive years; the expense may be the same; in the one case there may be a good return for the expenditure, in the other hardly any. It strikes me the introduction of corn should be always regulated by the price it bears in the country; I like rather a graduated duty rather than a fixed one.

The taxes are permanent, but the amount of payment will depend upon the more or less quantity there is to pay them; when therefore the means of paying them are variable, and it is to meet this variation on the part of the farmer, then it is, I think, wisely made a variable tax on import. By the variation of the tax you meet the variation of produce, and both together equalize taxation; I prefer therefore a fluctuating duty to a fixed duty, in order that it may suit itself to the fluctuating produce of the country (*y*).

Connected both with taxation and the corn laws is the question of the currency, on which some testimony was adduced.

Mr. *Burges* contends, that if relief be given to the great mass of consumers, who are the great mass of the operatives, by some remission of taxation, you will produce an equal deficit in the revenue, and

(*r*) Philip Halliwell, 19 July 1834. Q. 5829–5835.
(*s*) R. Needham, 18 July 1834. Q. 5570, 5571.
(*t*) John Lennon, 21 July 1834. Q. 6318, 6319.
(*u*) John Scott, 11 April 1835. Q. 2614–2620.
(*x*) R. M. Martin, Esq., 11 July 1834. Q. 3887.
(*y*) G. Burges, Esq., M.A., 23 July 1834. Q. 7010–7012.

and therefore be unable to keep faith with the public creditor; but if you leave the machinery unrestrained by some impost, you will beat down the price of labour to a minimum, and so prevent their workmen from consuming articles productive of revenue; on the other hand, if you tax machinery, you will diminish, say the political economists, the productive power of the country; and the question is, whether you will keep up the public faith or the productive power of the country; you cannot have both. If you have unrestrained machinery, you must have recurrence to an unlimited paper currency; for as it is the effect of an unlimited paper currency to raise the value of human labour, so, on the other hand, it is the effect of unrestrained machinery to diminish the value of human labour, and you can only keep it in equipoize by the operation of two conflicting principles. That Mr. Pitt had the same view of the question is proved by what he did at two different periods. Antecedently to the suspension of cash payments he was no friend to machinery, but after the suspension of cash payments he was a friend to it, without limit, and upon one occasion he made use of most remarkable language, by stating, he had "called a new power of production into exercise, in the shape of children in the factories." It was just at the time of Mr. Pitt's death, in 1805, that this power-loom was beginning to develope itself; he saw to what extent it must be carried, and therefore prophetically said he had called a new power into existence. But how had he called such a new power into existence? Only by giving facilities to the raising a fictitious capital, by enabling the Bank not to pay in gold, and inundating the country with paper-money; he saw that the effect of such a step would be to raise the value of human labour, and especially during a time of war. He saw also that it was necessary to counteract such a rise by fostering machinery to the fullest extent; and therefore I have come to this conclusion, if you chuse to have unrestrained machinery you must have unrestrained paper-money; both must exist or neither. At the present moment in England there is unrestrained machinery but restrained currency, producing all the evils that any person *à priori* would anticipate from such a state of things; while in Ireland you have nearly an unlimited paper currency, but no machinery to keep it in check, which would have raised the value of human labour there had there been a sufficient outlet for the capital so raised by paper. In England, however, where such outlets would present themselves could the capital be found with facility, these two powers, calculated to keep each other in check, are requisite, for if one be left to ride over the other the weaker must yield; it is only by the two powers being at an equal distance from a common centre that they keep money capital and labour capital on a level.

The increase of the circulating medium would enable the working classes to bear up against the injurious operation of machinery, because the nominal value of their labour would be increased from the facilities their employers would have of raising capital; where an individual can with difficulty raise 100*l.*, it is evident he can only give a small portion of that to the persons he employs, but if he can raise 200*l.* with the same facility that he could now raise 100*l.*, he could give a greater sum out of that 200*l.* than he can out of the 100*l.*; the result would be that operatives would receive more; and if I understand the whole intent of what has been brought before the public lately, it has been, that the labourers have been receiving in the ratio of 300 per cent. less than they did, and in some instances more so. In some particular species of work, where they used to receive 1*s.* 7*d.* (and that was during the suspension of cash payments) they only receive 2 $\frac{3}{4}$*d.* If such was the nominal price during the suspension of cash payments, I have reason to infer such will be the price again, if there were the same facilities with reference to raising capital which there is as to raising produce. From similar causes we argue similar effects, and as there was not at that period one-half of the present sufferings, I infer that by a return to similar prices similar results would be obtained.

Although the foreigner, who has property in the funds, or the Jew, who considers himself belonging to a nation that is scattered all over the globe, and admits no country as his home, might be very indifferent as to what sufferings the working classes of England might undergo, or what difficulty might arise through the Government paying the dividends; yet the people of great Britain who have property in the funds must be supposed to have the same feeling of humanity and good sense as other classes, and if it could be made out to them that machinery produces great suffering, and that that great suffering might ultimately be extremely prejudicial to them also, the two causes would doubtless make the majority of them willing to act with the Government in any measure likely to raise the labouring class into a situation of greater comfort and enjoyment. If the fundholders were told, unless certain things were done for the benefit of the working classes they would not receive their dividends, they would say, "For Heaven's sake do it, or we shall go;" but whether they have been influenced by only such a motive I cannot say; interest will induce them to do so. I will not say of my fellow creatures that they are worse than myself, or that they are better than myself; but under a feeling of interest, all would say, "Do anything rather than that we should suffer."

During the dreadful distress that affected the working classes, and the manufacturers, immediately subsequent to the resumption of cash payments, commonly called Peel's Bill, when a vast number of them were without all employment, a Committee was formed, and many of the fundholders of this country did subscribe large sums to assist these parties. I presume they did it out of mere humanity, although if they thought that by doing so they could make the stream, which stood a chance of running quite dry, plentiful again, and thus conceive when they were giving 5*l.* with the one hand they should receive 100*l.* with the other, no doubt they would subscribe; some might be influenced by that, and others by a much nobler motive; but the circumstance to which my attention has been directed proves that the resumption of cash payments has been the cause of great misery to the operatives, and it is in confirmation of the theory, that if you have unrestrained machinery you must have unrestrained paper currency. That may be proved in two ways; first, as to the facts that took place during the war; and next, by what took place when the system was altered. You prove it positively and negatively: positively in the *first* case, and negatively in the *last*; a position that can be so proved will defy all contradiction.

The first object of Government is to have the greatest number of people in the best possible circumstances, and all theories of whatever kind should be made subservient to that purpose, where there is a hope that that object will be attained. There never can be an increase of wages under the present restricted circulation, if machinery is to be unrestrained (z).

Mr. *Myerscough* says, the amount of taxation paid by the hand-loom weavers is generally estimated about 10*s.* out of every 18*s.*, or nearly so, which is better than one-half of those earnings of the labourers:

(z) G. Burges, Esq., M.A., 24 July 1834. Q. 7269. 7272. 7287, 7288. 7276–7278.

labourers: but I very much doubt if it was put upon the power-loom cloth on the same ratio that taxes are paid by hand-loom weavers, it would raise the power-loom cloth. It should seem that if it was taken off the one and put upon the other, it might relieve the hand-loom weaver; but I think that would tend rather to lessen the quantity produced by power, and would interfere very materially perhaps with the power-loom clothmaker; it would be removing the burthen from one shoulder to another, and would very materially interfere with the general trade of the country; for I am afraid it is generally found that whenever a burthen is removed, it finds its way back to the shoulder from which it was taken off: I do not think anything can be done in the way of removal of the taxes as long as we have the whole to pay in metallic currency. If there were two persons engaged in producing malt liquor or spirits, the one subjected to a very heavy excise, the other not at all, there can be no doubt that it is very desirable there should be a law to make them both pay the same amount of taxes. I admit that strict justice requires that both should equally contribute to the revenue, or both should be relieved from those burthens; but as to dividing the difficulty between both, I very much doubt whether it could be done or not. If it could be done, I admit that justice would authorize the Legislature to endeavour to give them both equally fair play, as far as the revenue of the country will permit it. One, however, of two things is necessary, either the increase of the circulation of the country, or a decrease in the quantity of the manufactures.

I am not aware of any practicable method of relieving the hand-loom weavers, so long as they will be obliged to bear the amount of taxes with a diminished currency, at present; that not only has a tendency to lower the price of wages, but to lower everything else (*a*).

With reference to the means of improving the condition of the labouring classes of the country, I would suggest the relief of the labouring classes from the taxes bearing on the necessaries of life, the extending the monetary system of the country so as to create a greater circulation of money, which has thus a tendency to raise wages, and the giving unlimited permission for egress to our colonies, where labour is of more value than at home, the people being transmitted there are enabled to purchase more of the manufactures of this country as their condition becomes improved (*b*).

The last remedy which it is necessary to advert to under this head, is that of taxing cotton-twist on exportation, and removing the entire duty on raw cotton. *John Lennon* says, we do not want that the whole of the duty levied upon raw cotton should be put on cotton-twist; but all we ask is this, that if the Government were about to reduce any part of the duty, that they should take off the duty altogether upon raw cotton, and put it to the same amount only of value, that should be afterwards ascertained, upon that part of the twist that is exported; but we do not mean to compel the exporter of cotton-twist to make up the whole amount of the duty now collected from raw cotton; all that we want is, that the duty should be reduced to the revenue of the country in so far as it comes upon the twist woven in our loom; that is, if this five-sixteenths of a penny more were laid upon raw cotton, have five-sixteenths of a penny laid upon cotton-twist, and not an amount equal to the total amount of the duty upon cotton. I consider that a duty laid upon cotton-twist, suppose there was no duty upon cotton-wool at all, would be beneficial to the weavers, for this reason, that except there is something done to protect our trade, it will leave us shortly, particularly our fancy trade, the jaconet and fine muslins; for all our tools are worn out; we cannot replace them; even if we had jennies to improve upon the plans, we have no means of doing it, owing to our great and increasing poverty.

I consider that an advance of wages now on the hand-loom would not affect the power-looms in the least, and my reason is this: because, if you look at the power-loom weavers, they have no expenses attending them; what they get out of the factory is 8 *s.* or 10 *s.* a week, and we cannot get that out of the hand-loom; if we were raised 2 *s.* a cut, we should not be equal to the power-loom. The condition of the hand-loom weavers can be raised, and not be equal to the power-loom weavers; because one-third of the hand-loom cloth is for foreign consumption, and the power-loom cloth is principally worn at home, for coats, waistcoats, trousers, and so on; for instance, in the petition for a reduction of one of the duties on cotton-wool, from the masters of Preston, they have stated that the duties taken off cotton-wool imported might be a benefit to the working classes principally; so that a greater part of the power-loom cloth is for home consumption; I agree with them. It would be a very great advantage if the duty that is levied upon cotton-wool, when it lands in England, should be taken off the cotton-wool, and put upon the cotton-twist when it goes out of England, in order that the weaver at home might have the benefit of relief from the taxation that comes upon it in its present shape. It would be a benefit to the trade to take the tax off raw cotton, provided we had a law to protect us if the income arising from the tax taken off accrued to the weaver, so that the spinning-master or the weaving-master would not monopolize the duty to themselves; because if it was taken off, and they could retain it, it would be no benefit to us. To put the amount of duty laid upon raw cotton as a duty upon the exportation of twist would benefit our weavers, for this reason, it would then enable us to come to the foreign market cheaper than we do: for the manufacturer would rather reduce his weavers' wages in proportion to the duty he paid for his twist, otherwise he would not manufacture so much (*c*).

SECTION IV.—*Prohibitory Duties; Embezzlement Laws; Stamp Indentures; Bleaching Stamp, and Emigration.*

THE remedies suggested under this head can scarcely be considered as such in reference to the root of the disease; they are rather collateral aids towards relieving the existing distress, and the evidence is brief, imperfect and unsatisfactory.

Prohibitory Duties are thus alluded to by *William Hale*, Esq.: I do not think that the lower class not engaged in manufacture, such as servants and so forth, wearing silk gowns, is a compensation to the country for the sufferings which the low prices of silks bring on the working classes, and the manufacturers who employ them, engaged in producing these silks; quite the contrary. Nor do I conceive that in order to prevent smuggling we must sacrifice our property, and reduce our people to

(*a*) Mr. Thomas Myerscough, 15 July 1834. Q. 4376–4386. 4366. (*b*) R. M. Martin, Esq., 11 July 1834. Q. 4073.
(*c*) John Lennon, 21 July 1834. Q. 6222–6238.

to the condition of the untaxed labour and less taxed capital of the Continental manufacturer and weaver: smuggling, I conceive, might be prevented without that. If a minimum rate of wages were to raise the price of labour, an additional premium would be given to the introduction of foreign silks; but I think that additional premium would be trivial, in comparison with the great good to be effected by having a numerous class of operative weavers. But most certainly, humanity, justice and sound policy require that we should rather put duties, almost entirely prohibitory, on foreign goods, than that we should allow them to degrade the condition of the weaver, and render him unproductive to his country in a great degree, and highly discontented and dissatisfied with his condition (*a*).

Embezzlement, while it is strongly condemned by the witnesses, is adverted to rather as a system which should be checked, *only after* relief has been afforded to the hand-loom weavers. Mr. *John Makin* says, I recommend the Committee to direct the attention of the Government to the system of embezzlement, in order that a person either buying or selling should be convicted upon the testimony of a single witness; *provided* the Government will afford some protection to the weaver against reductions in wages, because the immediate tendency of it would be to take from the weaver a present source of profit by which he ekes out his miserable pittance. I do not mean that the Committee should not endeavour to put a stop to this crime, which is so injurious to every body, except those parties who are not honest, in order that the weavers might be able to obtain their subsistence by dishonest practices; no, I am not desirous of saying so, but only as a matter of feeling, I should be sorry to come here to endeavour to amend the condition of the weavers directly, and go away with only having taken away something which gives them relief, and supplying them with nothing which would afford relief; a weaver will actually take two or three cops and barter them for a pipe of tobacco, and it is a known fact that he will take and barter it all, and he will barter it for an apron for his wife; and there is a witness in the room who will confirm me in this statement, that there is one public-house that takes nothing but cops and grops, stolen warp and weft, for weeks and weeks (*b*).

And *Richard Needham* says, in reference to the observation that even if the question of a minimum of wages should not be carried, that we should still not endeavour to stop embezzlement, my opinion is this, that if this application to Parliament, which has for its object the advance of our wages, should end in nothing but a law to punish the working classes, it would be very bad policy to pass any such law under present circumstances. But if accompanied with a boon, and that boon being an advance of living wages, then punish any man that is guilty of a crime. I do not think that one of the principal inducements to establish power-loom factories has been to prevent the great embezzlement that was taking place in regard to hand-loom weaving, because I must do justice to that body to which I belong, to state that the embezzlement is carried on not exactly by the weavers; it is brought to that nice point of calculation that they can calculate to a quarter of an ounce how much it would take to work a piece, and no master ever gives us any more than is necessary to work the piece. All the weft that is saved is saved by having careful winders. A person that is not a careful winder will never have a sufficiency. It is not the weaver that embezzles; it is the manufacturer's agent that is sent to put out work 10 or 20 miles from his own place. This agent of his will weigh the weaver perhaps two ounces of weft or one ounce of weft less than he knows will weave his cut, and then the man has not sufficient to work with; and supposing he has 100 weavers, and he weighs every weaver two ounces less than he ought to have, that is 200 ounces in a day, and when that amounts to a skip, that fellow sells that skip to some person he is connected with (*c*).

Stamp Indentures are thus adverted to. As to the Government lowering the stamp upon indentures to 5*s*., and giving out with the stamp a printed form of indenture to the parties applying for it, which might save them all law expenses in drawing up their indentures, if it were made imperative upon all who should exercise hereafter the business of a weaver that he should be bound apprentice, such a course would be very beneficial (*d*).

Bleaching Stamps: It is suggested that the bleacher ought to be required to stamp the goods which he bleaches, showing the width, length and breadth of the goods. It has been desired for 30 years, and Parliament, in 1800, when they passed the Arbitration Law, would have granted a law to fix the length and the breadth in all the pieces of cotton goods. I completely concur with the last witness in wishing that the bleacher might put his stamp upon it, and I will give a reason for it. Lately I was sent over to Manchester along with another person, and I had a conversation with one of the greatest manufacturers in Manchester, Mr. Gardner, and he stated to me that since he commenced business he bought many thousand pieces of a certain description, jacconets, at Blackburn; jacconets commenced at 50 inches broad, 10 yards long. The breadth has decreased from 50 inches to 40 inches, and the length has decreased from 10 yards to 7 ½; now those are called 60-reed jacconets; they show those jacconets in opposition to others which are actually 12 yards and 48 inches; they say these are 60-reed jacconets, and the fact is that they are not, and this causes the competition in the market; and for that reason it is desirable that the length and the breadth of every piece shall be put on by the bleacher (*e*).

Emigration, as a means of relief, is thus opposed: The system of emigration appears to me most improper and most unchristian. I think we have got to a sorry pass, if, in order to relieve ourselves here, with all our ingenuity, and all our capital, and all our industry, we are obliged to send healthy labourers to the other side of the world to eat a bit of bread. I think it is a full-grown, healthy, robust, clever man that makes land valuable and capital useful, because I am quite sure that even the capitalists cannot live upon gold and soil, and the system of emigration would lead them to take all the healthy able-bodied fellows out of the country, and leave the others, the lame, the halt and blind, to take care of their property, and to make such things as they could find them; and this, in my opinion, is neither more nor less than a bloody flux which this country has got into, and will in the end lead to ruin. I think we ought to keep our labourers at home to till our own fields and engage in our own manufactures; and I am sure if their labour was protected, there would be plenty of

(*a*) William Hale, Esq., 12 July 1834. Q. 4170–4173.
(*b*) Mr. John Makin, 18 July 1834. Q. 5294, 5295.
(*c*) R. Needham, 19 July 1834. Q. 5646, 5647.
(*d*) Mr. J. Makin, 18 July 1834. Q. 5299.
(*e*) R. Needham, 19 July 1834. Q. 5648.

of demand for their labour, and we should be a prosperous and happy nation. I know that the Emperors of Russia have taken a great deal of pains to get the cleverest people out of this country both as agriculturists and manufacturers (*f*).

Philip Halliwell says there are no weavers at Bolton who are desirous to emigrate. I cannot ascribe it to any other cause than this, a love of country, which in my judgment is a virtue. They still cling to their country, and still hope that the Parliament will not suffer them to continue in misery; and if I was to give my opinion upon the subject of colonization, I think it most extraordinary that we should pass to a distance of 6,000 or 8,000 miles to colonize, when we have many thousand acres in our own country that might be colonized to advantage, and many hundred thousand acres which are not half cultivated (*g*).

The foregoing completes, so far as brevity combined with due attention to so important a subject will admit, an Analysis of the Evidence laid before the Committee during the Sessions of 1834 and 1835. I trust it will be found sufficiently clear and ample to enable the Honourable House of Commons to form a decision on a question of momentous importance, not merely in reference to the large mass of British subjects petitioning for relief from the pressure of urgent distress, but also as concerns several of the most important branches of our manufactures. Fully impressed with the indispensable necessity of examining with rigid impartiality the arguments adduced by different individuals, in favour of separate and essentially different modes of relief, I hope it will be seen that I have executed the trust confided to me guided only by a desire to discover truths which may tend to the establishment of a sound and permanent commercial policy.

R. Montgomery Martin.

(*f*) Mr. R. Oastler, 10 July 1834. Q. 3849–3851.
(*g*) P. Halliwell, 19 July 1834. Q. 5826–5828.

PART IV.

HAND-LOOM WEAVERS IN SCOTLAND.

FROM the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on Hand-loom Weavers we find that no less than 20 witnesses from Scotland have been examined. The examination of these witnesses affords satisfactory proof of the judicious care with which they have been selected by their brethren in trade from the various classes of weavers and of manufacturers to which they respectively belong. It affords also indisputable evidence of the facts and allegations contained in the numerous petitions for relief that had been previously presented to the House of Commons by the suffering hand-loom weavers in England and Scotland. From none of the witnesses even has there been elicited anything at variance with any of those facts or allegations; facts and allegations, moreover, to use the language of the Report of the Select Committee itself, indicative of distress extensive, intense, protracted, and scarcely to be credited or conceived, yet borne with unexampled patience; this is the more remarkable, considering that these witnesses were severally subjected to an examination, certainly conducted in a patient, humane and gentlemanly manner, yet necessarily of a tedious and searching nature. The intelligence, the extensive information, the practical knowledge, and the good sense displayed by every one of the witnesses is, besides, a pleasing proof that those persons immediately interested in hand-loom weaving, whether employers or employed, are generally well acquainted with the present condition, with the causes of that condition, and with the present prospects of the various kinds of manufacture in which they are respectively engaged, and quite competent to appreciate the consequences of any change in the present mode of conducting those manufactures, whether such changes might occur in the ordinary course of commercial events, or by means of conventional or stipulated agreement between the manufacturers and weavers themselves, or in consequence of legislative enactment: and, above all, the consideration that neither party seems averse to any equitable arrangement; and that whilst the more influential weavers give full assurance that they are actuated by no selfish motive, many respectable manufacturers appear heartily willing to do any thing for the weavers that is compatible with the real interests of our various hand-loom manufactures, is a circumstance which cannot fail to dispose the Legislature to grant an attentive and patient, if not even a favourable ear, to the petitions of the hand-loom weavers; and which affords a gratifying pledge that should the Legislature in its wisdom see fit to make any enactment for the future regulation of our numerous hand-loom manufactures, such enactment may be expected to get a fair trial, and may, by the blessing of Providence, tend to the progressive advancement of our manufacturing classes in the first instance, and ultimately of our whole population, in comfort, in peace, and in morality.

The natural mode of conducting this analysis of the Minutes of Evidence now under review would be to consider, first, the distress of the hand-loom weavers, and its results; secondly, the causes of such distress; and, thirdly, the remedies proposed for the removal, or at least the alleviation of that distress. As Parliament and the Public, however, are generally acquainted with the nature, extent, and duration of the distress in question, its results and its causes, and generally disposed to allow the existence of these, as the remedies for that distress are less generally understood or allowed by either Parliament or the Public, and as the urgency of such distress imperatively claims the immediate attention of both, the prevailing opinion among the Members of the Select Committee is, that the remedies should be first adverted to: accordingly this consideration has determined us to treat of the subjects of our present analysis in their inverse order, and to the best of our judgment and discretion to take a succinct and impartial view, first, of the remedies for the existing distress; secondly, of the causes of such distress; and, thirdly, of that distress itself and its results, as these various subjects are exhibited in the authentic records of the Report of the Select Committee, and as far as practicable in the very language of the witnesses themselves.

As these witnesses, moreover, have been selected from various manufacturing classes, we shall accordingly in the different sections now proposed advert to the evidence furnished by those who are engaged; first, in the original manufacture of the country, that of linen; secondly, in the subsequently introduced manufacture of cotton; and thirdly, in the more recently cultivated manufacture of silk. And under these several heads we shall view, first, the evidence of the weavers, whom many persons may regard as incapacitated by their sufferings to give dispassionate testimony; and, secondly, as a corrective to testimony thus liable, however unreasonably, to be challenged, the evidence of the generally less suspected, because comparatively more comfortable, manufacturers. By this means, and with little trouble, both Parliament and the Public will be more able to decide justly and impartially with regard to the nature of the evidence, and the degree of importance that ought to be attached to it; and especially with regard to the propriety or impropriety of founding upon it any legislative enactment.

I.—*Remedies proposed for the Removal, or at least the Alleviation, of the Distress of the Hand-loom Weavers.*

1. *Remedies proposed by Individuals engaged in the Linen Manufacture:*

One of the witnesses examined before the Select Committee was James Buick, a weaver of coarse linens at Dundee. On being questioned whether he had contemplated any mode by which the weaver might be relieved, he replied, that he had contemplated various modes of relief, and that, for instance, the idea existed to a considerable extent among the operatives, that the condition of the weaver might be ameliorated by establishing a system of emigration to other climes and countries, and by thus at once increasing the amount of agricultural produce and extending the market for our commodities. That, as another mode of relief, it formerly was his impression, and that of many intelligent operatives in Dundee, that when the Reform Bill should be passed they might get some relief by the heavy load of taxation being reduced, and the corn laws modified or altogether set aside; but that, in contemplating those modes of relief, his mind had reverted to the idea that although provisions were made cheaper by the abolition of the corn laws, it would be still possible for the manufacturer to bring the weaver again to the same low

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condition by the reduction of wages. He admitted that if provisions were lowered by the abolition of the corn laws, and manufacturers were still to go on lowering their prices, the foreign market for our manufactures would be extended, as the foreign manufacturer would be beat out of it, and foreigners in general, having less to pay for our goods, enabled to consume more of them; but, as a set-off to this admission, he affirmed that selling too cheap would prove as ruinous as selling too dear, inasmuch as low prices, though they increase the quantity of goods sold, never fail to increase also the quantity manufactured, by obliging the weaver to work during a greater number of hours, and by thus even making him the unwilling instrument of diminishing to other weavers the chances of finding employment. He also admitted that the home market would be improved by a fall in the prices of provisions, as in that case every tradesman, shopkeeper or person who had money to spend, having less to pay for provisions, would have a greater demand for the productions of the loom. But, above all, the heart of this witness seems intensely set upon local boards of trade, which he regards as the only effectual means of ameliorating the condition of the weaver, and on this account he along with others had petitioned Parliament for the institution of such boards. He has an impression that this would be preferable to having one general board for all Scotland; that inasmuch as those engaged in one sort of manufacture do not understand the interests of those engaged in another sort, every sort should have its own board, and that even on the same principle distinct branches of the same manufacture should have separate boards. He thinks that every board should consist of a certain number of weavers and manufacturers; that on the part of the weavers, all of them who might be subjected to the influence of any board, should have some control in the election of their own delegates to such board; that such delegates might be chosen by ballot, with greater peace and quietness and with less ill-will than by open election; and the number of manufacturers and of weavers in every board being equal, should it so occur in any board that all the manufacturers were against, and all the weavers in favour of, any advance of wages, or on the contrary, that all the manufacturers were in favour of, and all the weavers against, any reduction of wages, that in either case provision should be made to refer the matter in dispute to referees. He thinks the erection of local boards would be attended with little expense; and upon being reminded of the great expense incurred by Parliamentary elections, he replied, that in comparison of these elections, the election, for instance, of weaver-delegates to a board, could be managed much more cheaply, as the electors could meet and do this business after a hard day's work; as the interest of all would be the same, there would be no occasion for bribery, and even should any one have a disposition for bribery, he would not have the means of gratifying it. He wishes for boards of trade, not to compel the manufacturer to pay any price which would injure the foreign market, but merely to deter any selfish, avaricious or short-sighted individual from beginning a reduction of wages, which in a short time afterwards all the manufacturers are obliged to follow; to secure to the weaver his fair proportion of any advance in the prices of goods manufactured that might from time to time take place, and to moderate if possible that reckless and ruinous extent to which competition is now carried; and is of opinion, that the very knowledge of the fact that boards of trade were established would be instantly productive of these salutary effects. In illustration of the beneficial influence of such boards to the weaver in the case of an improved market, he states that an advance of about 1 *s.* or 1 *s.* 6 *d.* a week in the prices for weaving coarse linens, which took place in August 1833, which was only gradually made by an addition of 6 *d.* at a time, and which was unjustly delayed from a knowledge that the weavers were ignorant as to the improvement in the market, would have been obtained five or six months earlier had boards of trade been in existence during that period. Being asked how in any board the weavers could have such a knowledge of facts as would enable them to get at the truth, and to correct and control any false statements made by the manufacturers for the purpose of knocking down wages, he thinks that in such a case the weavers would be able to form to a certain extent a correct opinion, because at present when markets get a little brisker they generally obtain some idea of it; that as members of a board they would not know less of such an event; that it would not be absolutely necessary for them to know all the circumstances connected with the rates of commission or of foreign exchange, or the like; that it would be enough for their purpose, without entering into details, to state the general prosperity of the trade; that it would be impossible for the manufacturers to mis-state or falsify the case to such an extent as to mislead them; that in such a body of men as would assemble round a board, there would be so much intelligence and information as would enable any one to elicit the truth; and that at present both parties resemble a rope of sand, leaving to every man, like the Israelites of old, to do that which is right in his own eyes, and thus allowing the capricious influence of poverty, avarice and any short-sighted policy to regulate the rate of wages, but that this would have a greater chance of being decided by wisdom and justice in a board. He admits that, to a certain extent, according to the state of trade, wages must rise or fall, whether there were boards or not; but considers that these alone can prevent wages from continually falling, as they have done since 1809, and that this continued fall should carry conviction to every man's mind of the indispensable necessity of boards. With regard to competition, he declares that the weavers consider it to be a fine thing, and that it should exist in every trade, but that they wish that extreme competition should be moderated. He emphatically asks what would be the use of working at all if the principle of competition is to be carried to the greatest possible extremity, if it is to be allowed to have its full weight and scope, if every manufacturer is to sell as low as possible, and if he is to continue to do so till the weaver is reduced to extreme degradation and poverty, till he cannot live upon the wages given for making the article manufactured, and till he is reduced to a potatoe every 24 hours; and he quaintly observes, that the principle of extreme competition is not put in practice in any other trade, or where labour is wanted, as, for example, in all the official situations under Government, for which plenty of hands are to be got, and of which the salary is not reduced in proportion to the number of applicants. He admits that it would be difficult to deny the fact that the extent of the demand for goods is regulated by the price at which the goods are sold, but thinks that it would be as difficult to disprove the bad consequences of extreme competition; that, in illustration of this, it would be impossible to deny the fact, that drinking too much liquor has a tendency to impair the human constitution, and that as it would be wisdom to drink in temperance, so temperate competition would be better, and have happier effects than extreme. Were restraint upon extreme competition to have even the effect of diminishing the demand for our manufactures, he would still in that case consider himself better off in many respects than he is at present, because having higher wages, and therefore working a shorter number of hours, he would have more ease, and more leisure for reading and other mental exercises. He is however of opinion, that by establishing a judicious system of competition, and by compelling all manufacturers to pay alike, and thereby removing

removing the temptation to undersell one another, at least to the same extent as they do at present, wages would be kept permanent for a certain time, moderate wages would be gradually effected, and even the condition of the weavers on the Continent would be ameliorated. The rise in the prices of goods, in consequence of such restricted competition, would be so moderate and gradual, that it could not possibly injure the market, and thus, without lessening the consumption, the weaver would be enabled to live in some degree of comfort by his labour. Though aware that manufactures are carried on as vigorously in Prussia and America as in this country, and in fact more so than in Ireland, he does not on that account think that the proposed restriction upon home competition would shut us out from the foreign market; but if this should ever prove likely to be the consequence of such restriction, he is persuaded that the boards would give way, and would not attempt to strain things so as to drive themselves out of the trade. On the other hand, he does not think that restraining any low-paying manufacturer from carrying on the present bad system would ever compel him to throw his weavers out of work, and thereby produce a reaction in those weavers themselves. Rather also than glut the market he would prefer refraining from work occasionally. Being interrogated whether lessening the quantity of goods manufactured would, instead of each weaver being employed a less number of hours, rather have the effect of throwing a number of weavers, the worst in point of skill and ability, out of employment, he answered, that there is no doubt that when work is dull a manufacturer is always inclined to keep the best workmen, but that the system now beginning to be pursued by the weavers, that of making the apprenticeships longer, would have the effect of making individuals of the weakest capacity good enough workmen, particularly in the coarse linen fabrics, and that therefore he did not conceive it would ever come to such a pass that any would be thrown out of employment in consequence of not being able to make good work. And for the purpose of promoting longer apprenticeships, as without an indenture no one can be bound for a period exceeding 12 months, the witness evinced a great anxiety to have the stamp duty upon indentures abolished, or at least greatly reduced *.

John Adam, Forfar:—I am a linen weaver; but I work chiefly at Osnaburghs, a fabric different from that at which the preceding witness is employed. I am also one of those whom the consequences of home competition have driven to petition Parliament for redress; and I can say that we would be very seriously disappointed unless Parliament were to attempt something for us; but that even any arrangement which, though it did not raise our wages, would prevent, if it could be done, our being rendered still more wretched than we now are, would give us some faith in the trade, and enable us to work, and give us also some certainty that we could fulfil any engagements we might come under. If we had better wages the farmer would get better prices, or at all events more regular payments, and as it would be the interest of every one of our neighbours, they would rejoice in the improvement of our condition. Should boards of trade be thought impracticable, I think Parliament can extend the trade by reducing the duties upon foreign produce; for instance, as I have been informed by a gentleman who ships a considerable quantity of cloth, Osnaburghs generally, we have the greatest difficulty in competing with the foreigner in the Brazilian market, in consequence of our high duties upon the rum and sugar of that country, and the consequent necessity of our merchants selling for hard cash only. Were exportation more general, and new fields opened up for our produce, it would better the trade generally, and, though it might not prevent competition, would increase wages, at least so long as the demand was brisk. Still, as articles for the foreign trade go off periodically, the demand might fall off suddenly; then the manufacturers might get wages down, and these when once down are not easily raised. Besides, though I do not think that there is one Irish weaver in Forfar there are some in Dundee, and as what affects the latter place must also affect the former, therefore, in so far as concerns the weaver, any beneficial effects of an extended market might be prevented by a fresh importation of Irish labour. Taking the country on an average, the differential excess in the amount of home or foreign trade may be much in favour of the former; but as far as regards Forfar, I am certain that three-fourths of our making, Osnaburghs chiefly, is for exportation, and I am almost certain that they are not even used in Great Britain. We do not complain of the price of grain; the worst effect of the corn laws is, that they fetter trade and industry. Were we to admit corn from Poland and other countries which export that article they would take our manufactures in return; and with regard to the landlord, the natural and only effect of cheaper corn would be a reduction of his rental. Though I am not aware of the proportion which the expenditure of the farmer bears to the home trade, I do not see how that trade is in any degree enlivened by the corn laws. I am of opinion that wages do not regulate the price of agricultural produce; the consumer of grain may be stinted in the quantity he gets, but he cannot give more for that article than he is able to pay. We do not wish to check, but to moderate, home competition by some such regulating principle as boards of trade, at least till the Legislature shall reduce the taxes, or place them more upon dormant capital, and less upon the productive capital which gives employment to the weavers and the other industrious classes. I certainly think such a regulation as that of Paisley is highly desirable; and, in my opinion, the best way would be to have a board of masters and operatives, and in cases of dispute a referee, quite unconnected with either party. I would wish that this referee in county boards should be nominated by the sheriff, and in other boards by some local magistrate. I cannot give the ideas of the manufacturers in Forfar as to the establishment of boards; it is a question in which they rather declined taking any part; they will neither petition for boards nor oppose their being granted, but they are quite willing to submit to anything which Parliament in

* The intelligent reader will hardly need to be informed that in conducting the examination of a witness, philosophical connexion must give way to expediency; that the necessary questions must be put to him in such a way as may fully expiscate his ideas and real sentiments about those subjects regarding which it may be thought proper to interrogate him, and that on this account minutes of evidence are always desultory and uninviting documents. None however but those whose duty it is to peruse these tiresome documents can fully appreciate the value of an accurate, faithful and attractive analysis of them. For the purpose, therefore, of rendering this classification of the various topics contained in the Minutes now under review more attractive than it otherwise would be, we shall as far as practicable, and as in the case of the above witness's evidence, use the form of a legal declaration. Since the substance of that individual's evidence was sent to the press, it has also occurred to us, that the same desirable object of attractiveness might be still farther subserved by substituting, as often as the form of a legal declaration was adopted, the first person for the third. The comparatively uninviting form of a statistical account will be made use of in whole or in part as to the examination of any particular witness, only when it cannot well be avoided. By these means accordingly it is hoped that this analysis will be found a vivid and impressive representation of the multifarious facts and opinions comprised in the Minutes.—*Compiler.*

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in its wisdom may devise as a remedy for the grievances of the weavers. I am also of opinion that they would consent to the establishment of boards if the thing could be prudently effected, and that some of them would very willingly act as members of such boards; every one of them knows that no board could raise wages higher than the profits of capital will allow. Whether the manufacturers, were they as a body to meet and elect their part of a united board, would generally select their delegates from the houses that were the best paying, and upon the most friendly footing with the body of operatives generally, is a circumstance about which I cannot speak positively, but I have heard manufacturers complain very much of being undersold in the market by individuals; and though I cannot say anything about Dundee, and though, in consequence of Forfar being an inland town, all its exports and imports pass through Dundee, and its manufactures are a good deal regulated by the manufacturers of that town, still, as far as regards Forfar itself, there are manufacturers that the weavers would depend upon. I consider that to a certain extent the channels of information are open to the operatives as well as to the masters; that the former could understand the actual necessity of a reduction as well as of a rise of wages, and that if fairly represented in a board they would assent to a reduction of the minimum rate; but whatever was the minimum rate, no manufacturer could, without loss, undersell his neighbour, and that would protect us from capricious changes.

By an Act passed in 1803, to regulate disputes between weavers and manufacturers in the cotton trade, all disputes that occurred between the parties, as to the length of the web, were to be settled by the ell of 45 inches, and accordingly the foregoing witnesses are exceedingly anxious for a similar enactment with regard to the linen trade; in that trade the necessity of such a remedy has been more and more felt, and the more especially as the case having been tried before a court of justices in Dundee, no redress can be obtained by any existing law.

Mr. *James Grant*:—I am a manufacturer of linen goods; and in Dundee, where I reside, there is no cotton manufacture. I have heard it stated by a respectable merchant of that town that, taking the whole produce of Forfarshire and Fifeshire, and part of Perthshire and Aberdeenshire, the foreign was but a fractional part of the entire trade; but I could not say what that fractional part is. The same authority also admits at once that, taking Dundee alone and independently of the rest of the surrounding towns, there is more of the produce of it disposed of in the foreign trade than in the home. I know that certain fabrics of Forfarshire are mostly consumed at home, and others mostly in foreign parts. When manufacturers make for the foreign market exclusively, and are hard pressed as to profit, they cease producing the article, and turn their attention to the home article, and, consequently, this creates an additional supply for the home market, and has a tendency to depress it. I have statements [*handing them in*] embracing the years 1832, 1833 and 1834, which show that we have to contend with a good deal of competition in the foreign market, that our competitors have been there before us, and that our articles are only imitations of theirs; and therefore, according to the description of the foreign agents, rarely maintain the same prices as the articles produced by the Russians and Germans. The goods I manufacture are used some of them in the home but most of them in the foreign market, and I dispose of both in Dundee to merchants who afterwards export them to London, Liverpool, Manchester or Glasgow. I think any provision which would oblige the manufacturer to pay the weaver by the yard of cloth produced would tend to give satisfaction, and though this provision might be attended with some difficulty and expense, these would be fully repaid by the good resulting from the practice.

This witness's evidence about boards, appears to us to be anything but dispassionate, and so reluctantly given, and withal so palpably incoherent, that we have found it almost impossible to give anything like a systematic outline of its contents. To appreciate it duly it must be entirely perused. We shall, however, endeavour to enable our readers to form some idea of its nature and tendency.

I think that boards of trade, as far as Dundee and Forfarshire are concerned, and as I heard them described by a former witness (*James Buik*), could do no good, would be injurious, and are uncalled for, and even impracticable. The operatives in a board would have some chance of very imperfect information, such as the accounts of the state of the markets furnished in the newspapers, and which are generally correct, but not always; slight alterations occur in the market, and are not observed by those who furnish such accounts. They could not know what the master could afford to give, unless the manufacturers instructed them, and, generally speaking, they would not be inclined to do so, indeed they could not. Granting that I am a member of a board, and that I am under a necessity of reducing my wages, I tell my men so; it amounts to the same thing whether they believe me or not; if they do not believe me, I say I cannot give more wages; they cannot say that I must do it; I may say I will not manufacture; I would cease doing that. I do not know how even manufacturers could come to the knowledge of the surreptitious encroachments of individuals of their own body. After all, it is questionable if parties would be satisfied with a board, for the prices of yarns and of cloth are pretty generally known; notwithstanding all the dissatisfaction of individuals, the manufacturer's profits are no secret. As far as Dundee is concerned, and as far as I have heard, I have heard no great complaints against the manufacturers on the score of reduction of wages; there have been complaints of particular individuals, but, generally speaking, the manufacturers and weavers in Dundee do not quarrel much about wages.

If the fixing the rate of wages depended upon the manufacturer's representation of his profits, undoubtedly the manufacturers would have the entire power of fixing that rate, and in that case would rather be induced to keep down the wages than to raise them, particularly if they proceeded upon a selfish principle. By boards I think the rate of wages would not be so good as it is now. It is the business of boards to regulate the prices of goods and wages in such a way as one could not outstrip or undersell his neighbour, and thus to put a fixed value upon the price of labour and the article produced; now the chance is that this fixed value would be such as would cause less consumption or less demand, and consequently injure the trade. The price of the article always falls before wages, and if wages are kept up artificially by boards, and the article falls, it will cease to be produced; because if I am compelled to pay for my manufacture a certain price more than I can afford to do, I must make less, or drop it altogether. If I had a large stock of my manufacture on hand, and another house by depressing the wages of the operatives lowered the value of the commodity, I would most assuredly feel this as a loss upon the whole of my stock in trade; but then it generally so happens that a certain loss upon my stock on hand would actually come before this reduction; say now, for example, that I bought yarns in the month of February, and I hold the goods till now (July), which is the case in some instances; these goods have fallen eight per cent.; now some houses have been going on making the same fabric to a lesser or greater extent, owing to the quantity of yarns they had on hand; for some reason or another the wages have been reduced a little, but inde-

pendently of the reduction of wages there would have been a loss, and this loss did come before the reduction of wages. I am not aware that the reduction of wages, by enabling other persons to make cloth at a cheaper rate, adds to the loss which would otherwise take place, because I could make at a cheaper rate as well as they when I got rid of the article on hand, but till I do that I have no inducement to make; and whether wages rose or fell I should sustain a loss upon the stock on hand, and in consequence of this loss the wages fall, and the loss sometimes is before the fall in wages. No such thing as capricious depressions exist in the manufactory of Dundee or Forfarshire; the species of competition which exists in the cotton trade does not exist in the same way in ours. There is no doubt that we individually serve our customers as cheap as we can; but if I find it worth my while to sell at a certain rate, I do not mind at what another man sells. I admit that the injurious effect of boards would be obviated by their, from time to time, fixing such a varying scale as the exigencies of the trade might demand; but in this case the boards themselves would be entirely useless; for just now the wages are fully as high as the profits in trade will permit, and even higher, and have been so for some time. On some fabrics I have no profit; I continue to make them, from a wish to retain my customers, and in the hope of profit at some future period. Whether I lose by them or not is only to be determined by the amount of profit and loss taken together and the average struck. The trade is at a loss now; and if that be found to be greater than the gain at former periods, then there would be a loss upon the whole; but if the gain at a former period will cover the loss now, then I do not lose by them.

Such a society as a board could not regulate wages, which must depend upon profits, and could not be made uniform in all parts of the country, or even at a particular place. I much doubt the wages could not be regulated according to the rate of profit, inasmuch as one (board, or person, or both?) would naturally come into collision with another. I do not think that if a manufacturer was obliged to expose what was the rate of his profit, he would consent to be appointed a member of a board, because much of the profits of our trade depends just upon the degree of expertness with which one man can step before another in the mode of his manufacture. If, upon a good deal of consideration, I could step a small march before my neighbour, would I expose that? Certainly not; I would keep it to myself as long as I could.

It is but lately since I at all turned my attention to the subject of boards, and my knowledge of it is very imperfect. I understand by boards a society or corporation for the purpose of maintaining a certain rate of profit and wages. Admitting the rate to be variable, a society of the operatives and of the masters in fair proportions, for the purpose principally of regulating the price of wages according to the price of manufacture, would not be injurious to the two interests. The publication of a list of prices and of other things connected with the particular manufacture, specifically stating every necessary item, such as that which constituted the particular article, the quantity of weft, and the yards produced, would have a tendency to check the surreptitious encroachments of individual manufacturers. Taking mankind generally, a man would be more likely to be just where he had to explain himself and his conduct towards a person, between whom and himself a doubt as to what he himself should do existed, than where he had no such explanation to give. If a manufacturer were content to give an account of his profits to a board, there is very little chance of his giving an unfair reason for the reduction of wages. By explanation, an agreement between the parties is more likely to take place. It is a natural conclusion, that the weavers who are now dissatisfied with the amount of wages which they receive would submit quietly to any reduction which might take place, if it was clearly proved to them that the manufacturers could not afford to give them more on account of the state of the trade; but how is this to be done? One of the effects of boards would be to circulate among the weaving body generally dispassionate information of the prices which the manufacturers could afford to pay them; and it is natural to suppose that such information would make the weavers submit with more patience than they now do to any reduction of wages. Any mode by which Parliament could diminish his hours of working and improve his wages would assuredly be beneficial to the weaver and to the community at large, and if not injurious to the manufacturer might be advantageously adopted in the linen trade. That trade can never be reduced so low as the coarser part of the cotton trade is just now, without the introduction of machinery and power-looms. As these, however, may be possibly introduced into their own trade also, the linen weavers are probably afraid of being as much reduced as the cotton weavers; this may have led them to ask for boards, of which they have no experience. I believe the weavers in Dundee are of late desirous of something of the kind; and I know they would be disappointed if Parliament were not to make some experiment, for the purpose of proving the utility of the desired regulations. The weavers alone, without the manufacturers, recommended me to come up here and give evidence. Power-loom cloth contributes less to the revenue than hand-loom cloth, inasmuch as the work is performed by fewer hands, and with less individual labour.

2. *Remedies proposed by Individuals engaged in the Cotton Manufacture:*

Hugh Mackenzie, Glasgow.—I am a hand-loom weaver in the plain muslin line, which includes every species of work not connected with the harness-loom.

The redundancy of hands engaged in hand-loom weaving arises not from over-population, but from too much skill in facilitating production; and though the population were not to increase to one individual more than they now are, the improvements in machinery would have a tendency to throw them out of employment. It is extremely difficult, and requires great interest, for a weaver to get his children into any other trade than his own; every trade has a redundancy of hands, and those engaged in it a combination to shut out any one not connected with their own families. Two-thirds of the weavers who work for the manufacturers live in the country and in rural districts; though the agricultural labourers and others are now not so much in the habit as they formerly were of sending their children to the weaving, there are no public works to which the weavers might send their own children. There are, perhaps, 14,000 steam-looms in Scotland, and of these about 10,000 may be in Glasgow. A girl is required for every two looms, and many weavers' daughters are so engaged; this is no direct relief to his boys, but it enables the weaver himself to live.

Emigration, at best, is only a temporary relief. I shall suppose that there are in Scotland 100,000 persons only, and that 10,000 of these are sent away to Canada; this would lessen the number of hands, but their place would be immediately filled up by machinery, and then there would be the same quantity of production as formerly, and the same necessity of getting quit of another 10,000 persons. Besides, every 10,000 take away along with themselves their own consumption, and to that amount the remainder consume less of landed and artificial productions. And, like the Americans, those who go away will soon be able to do for themselves.

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A system of poor laws in Ireland, similar to our Scotch system, would greatly diminish the influx of Irish labourers into the west of Scotland. Whether landowner, manufacturer, or operative, all should be protected alike; and, in the natural sense of the word, the operative has the first right to protection. The experiment of free trade has been tried on one side only, and does not work just altogether well. Formerly, for instance, on account of the duty upon printed calicoes, comparatively few of the coarser fabrics were printed: now the duty has been taken off, and the printing of these is very common, and operates as a bounty to the power-loom. So long also as there is a system of duty upon many of the articles of foreign manufacture, it is certainly very absurd to talk of free trade.

We have a strong impression on our minds that Government may interfere on our behalf, and establish something like a board to regulate, not to cramp, trade—some wholesome rule to effect an equalization of prices, so that one manufacturer may go on with confidence that another will not undersell him. We have a complete reliance upon Government that it will, on the present occasion, do something for us; this keeps up our spirits; but it is merely a stimulus, and is incapable of much longer sustaining the bent at which our spirits are thus held.

Reductions of wages frequently take place from circumstances over which the manufacturer has no control; and a very great number of well-principled manufacturers are very sorry for any reductions. To keep up the prices of goods and the weavers' wages is the interest and the disposition of the manufacturers generally. Our evils are to be traced to a higher class, consisting chiefly of retired manufacturers, and of those who never manufactured anything, to which few of our manufacturers belong, who export our manufactures, and who frequently resort to unjustifiable means to compel the manufacturer for the foreign market to reduce both the prices of goods and the weavers' wages. And at present our principal fear is, that though we should bring forward the clearest possible evidence in support of the propriety of establishing boards and of cutting up the principles of home-competition, the influence of those exporters upon such Members of Parliament as have no knowledge of the subject will counteract all our views and wishes.

The Spitalfields Act is the favourite and never-failing objection of all who are unfriendly to boards; and, notwithstanding our numerous endeavours to make ourselves as intelligible as possible, we have had the mortification to find that a number of Members of Parliament have really mistaken our views. On this topic a remark has been made by our Association; it has been prefixed to our plan of a board; both are in print, and the former is as follows:

"Many individuals of much discernment have mistaken our meaning with regard to our proposed plan of a general board of arbitration, and confound it with the old Spitalfields Act; yet, however similar they may be in appearance, there can be nothing more opposite in their natures. The Spitalfields Act enforced a fixed rate of wages, which was not subject to fall, however much circumstances or the nature of trade might require it, and therefore must have wrought stiffly. Our plan is more pliant, because it proposes only a floating minimum, which would rise at all times to the level of what trade could afford, or yield to any temporary depression, without losing its strength of spring, and therefore would work more smoothly. The Spitalfields Act was local, and confined to an identical spot; consequently other places in the country, which were not subject to the same laws, took the advantage, and soon underwrought its workmen, and undersold its manufacturers in the market. Our plan proposes a general extension of the law over the whole nation; consequently competition would be equalized, and change from its present feverish condition to a sound state of health, when it would not then be as now, who could manufacture cheapest by grating down the wages of his workmen, but who could sell cheapest and keep his ground on the least possible quantum of profit."

Such are the principles of our proposed plan, of which we have sketched a general outline. (*The same was delivered in, and read as follows:*)

"That there shall be one general board of trade, as it is already established, for the whole nation, which shall superintend all branches of business; and, as at present, to sit in London.

"That there shall be three subordinate boards, whose duty it shall be to superintend and regulate the prices of workmanship in the silk, woollen, and cotton trades, performed by hand-weaving; also the linen trade, and every production of the loom that is not connected with power-weaving; of which one shall be established in Manchester, for England; one in Glasgow, for Scotland; and the other in Belfast, for Ireland.

"That these boards shall consist of a certain number of manufacturers and weavers, who shall sit once a quarter, or at stated periods, and be empowered to regulate the rates of workmanship of each respective fabric, so that, as far as possible, it shall be consistent with the mutual benefit of master and workman, and the prosperity of the trade at large.

"That when any branch of manufacture is local, and confined to any of the three great districts of England, Scotland or Ireland, then that board of trade in whose jurisdiction it lies shall have full powers to regulate the prices of weaving in that particular branch of business, independent of the other two, but subject, if thought necessary, to the review and approbation of the central board in London. And again, when the manufactured article is alike general and prevails over the whole nation, then the three boards, in the event that any alteration in the price of workmanship should be called for, must correspond on the subject, and agree to such a rise or fall as the circumstances of the case shall require; if unanimous, the measure shall be final, if not, the decision of the majority shall be subject to the review and approbation of the central board in London.

"That the manufacturers and weavers shall respectively appoint from their own bodies the necessary numbers to constitute a board; and who shall be taken from the different districts of the jurisdiction in proportion to the quantity of manufactures carried on therein.

"That every question decided at any of the respective boards, which shall have the unanimous consent of a full meeting, shall be final.

"That in the event of the votes being equally divided, the case shall be submitted to the consideration of the President of the Board of Trade in London, whose decision as umpire shall be final.

"That the boards in settling the price of workmanship shall be guided as nearly as possible by the data of what the manufacturers of principle and respectability could reasonably afford, without bringing the trade into jeopardy by the competition of foreign nations.

"That the prices of workmanship thus set shall not be a fixed rate which every manufacturer shall be obliged to pay and no more, but a minimum, under which they shall not be permitted to come, leaving at all times any individual at liberty to rise as much above it as is suitable to his interest when forwarding an order, or when he wishes to increase his trade.

"That the regulations of the board shall be binding till next sitting, and to be enforced by suitable penalties imposed on all open transgressors and those who evade the law.

"Such

"Such is the sketch of a plan now submitted to your consideration, which, if sanctioned by the Legislature, could hardly fail of producing the most beneficial effects: it would give confidence to the manufacturer; it would gradually better the condition of the workman; and the increased circulation of money from such a vast body of workmen would give an additional spring to every other branch of trade. It would enable them to raise funds for the support of their idle workmen; and, in Scotland, do away with that disagreeable provision which the local authorities are periodically under the necessity of making for the idle and famished operatives in almost every manufacturing district. But that is not all, the whole empire would feel it; and if the same law were extended to every other occupation, and they again made answerable for the support of their own idle hands, it would have the direct effect of doing away with the one-half of the poor-rates of England."

"Signed by the Joint Committees of Plain and Harness Unions."

What we mean is, that there should be one general board of trade, and that the local boards should be branch boards only; that wherever any particular kind of manufacture is confined to any one kingdom, and is therefore not exposed to the influence of home competition, that particular kind of manufacture should be under the jurisdiction of its own branch board alone; but that wherever a manufacture is carried on in more than one of the three kingdoms, it should be under the joint regulation of all the boards to which it owns jurisdiction, as, for instance, that a manufacture carried on in Paisley and in Coventry or Spitalfields should be regulated by the English and Scotch boards jointly, and also that every board, whether branch or joint, should be subject to its great controlling head, the President of the Board of Trade. His arbitration however would be seldom necessary; in fifty cases it is possible that not even one of them would be made the occasion of an appeal to London.

There are manufacturers who are willing to give reasonable wages to their workmen, who are restrained from so doing solely by the fear of being undersold in the market by other manufacturers, and who assure us that if others would not undersell them they could afford to raise wages one-third, or possibly one-half. Were two or three of the most respectable manufacturers consulted as to what they are now paying, and as to what they could afford to pay, as wages to the weavers, I conceive the weavers appointed to a branch board would be reasonable enough to perceive whether a rise were advisable or not. The statements of those manufacturers would also furnish data for fixing what was to be the minimum of wages till such time as it might be thought proper to decide otherwise. The minimum would thus be regulated according to the circumstances of the trade. The wages for any sort of manufacture moreover should be uniform in every place; if just now the Belfast weaver had more money to spend than the Glasgow one, or the Paisley one than his fellow workman in Coventry, house-rent, provisions and other necessaries might soon rise as high in the former places as in the latter, and at any rate it would be unjust to make a man, even though he could afford to do it, perform the same task for less money than his neighbour. Provided only it be under the same government, the same quantum of labour justly entitles a man to the same quantum of hire.

Boards would have no beneficial effect if their influence were not extended to Ireland. When the linen trade of that country had in some measure fallen off, the west of Scotland was inundated with Irish weavers, and it might have been so even though boards had been then in existence in Ireland; but in that case those Irish weavers would have found it very difficult to obtain employment in this country, they would have been left to the resources of their own; and our manufacturers would have been under no temptation, as they now are, to employ them at coarse and cheap work, which rather than altogether starve, the unhappy adventurers are glad to take at prices unreasonably low. Boards would be a blessing to Ireland; in that kingdom, were wages brought to a level with those in this country, the industrious classes would have the means of purchasing much of what their country exports to England and Scotland; this would raise the prices of provisions and other necessaries of life which in every country will rise to the measure of what the workman can afford to give for them; and also as a necessary consequence increase the value of landed property. And whatever were the rate of provisions and other necessaries in Ireland, whether it was low or high, that country as well as Britain would have its chance in the manufacturing market.

Neither would boards have the least tendency to carry the trade from Scotland to Ireland; had they any such tendency the trade would be carried off just now. At present provisions are certainly much lower in price in Ireland than in Scotland; they were also very cheap within 30 or 40 miles of Glasgow before the trade was extended; but in every spot of the country to that distance, and much farther, and in short wherever trade has extended, provisions are as dear as in that city; so extending the trade to Ireland would also cause a rise in the value of provisions and every other necessary of life in that country. If the trade were taken from Scotland to Ireland it would be certainly injurious to the latter; such a transfer, however, would be impossible; the trade would only be more generally diffused than it is at present, and the empire at large consequently more happy. Were even the same quantity of goods that is just now made in Scotland alone to be made in Ireland and Scotland together, still this would be a benefit to the latter; the Glasgow weaver would live as well as any other tradesmen, and he would have to work a great deal less, a circumstance which would tend very much to thin the market of goods. Ireland is already working for Scotland; she has something to do, only on a low scale of prices, and even though, by a rise of wages, she had more to do, she would not put into the market one additional yard of surplus production.

Though frequent attempts have been made by the weavers to get reductions of their wages permanently prevented by an amicable arrangement with the manufacturers, and without having recourse to the Legislature, and though they have been favoured by many manufacturers, every attempt, on account of the diversity of opinion among those manufacturers, has ultimately failed. The harness-loom weavers, however, have been more successful with their manufacturers; these being comparatively few in number, have the more easily come to a good understanding among themselves; they have agreed upon a minimum of wages for all the different sorts of work they give out in town and country, and have acted upon it up to the present day, and since the agreement took place, to all appearances they are going on with confidence, and some of them have even acknowledged that the agreement, by inspiring a consciousness that no one of them can underseil another, has been extremely beneficial. This arrangement was effected in Paisley about 18 months ago, and adopted in Glasgow about six months afterwards. It was effected in a very simple manner; a table of prices for all species of work made at Paisley was made out by the manufacturers, and another by the weavers; each party next submitted its table to the correction of the other party, and the result was a mutually fixed minimum for the subsequent 12 months. Several manufacturers did not even confine themselves to the minimum; when they got a very brisk demand for goods, in order to procure hands, they raised the wages considerably, in many instances one third, above the minimum. Any manufac-

turer, however, who had not got such extensive orders for goods, was considered perfectly honourable and consistent in adhering to the minimum; it was according to bargain; any addition to it was the mere pleasure of individuals, and no weaver could refuse to work at it. For some time past the Paisley trade has been rather duller than formerly, and those manufacturers who rose above the minimum have now come down to it. But still this arrangement is defective; in case of difference, as there is no umpire between the parties, they are left to decide it as well as they can between themselves; the weavers agree to what is reasonable, but beyond this they have nothing to say in the matter.

Paisley manufactures little or no plain work, and is principally occupied in the harness department. With the exception of Perth, I am not aware of any other place in Scotland where the wages for weaving the same species of manufacture are less than they are in Paisley. In the plain department wages vary, and in many parts of the country are possibly 10 per cent. lower than in Glasgow; but in the harness department just now town and country weavers are paid alike, and with this difference only, that the latter has to pay for the carriage of his work to and from the warehouse of his employer. The state of the harness-loom manufacture of Edinburgh is no proof that boards of trade would be unproductive of any benefit. That city carries on a kind of customary trade; as far as I can learn, it sends no work to the country, and does not therefore break in very much upon the same branch of manufacture elsewhere; like Paisley, it manufactures the very richest goods, but it confines itself to a very few exceedingly rich articles; these are a kind of work to which very few weavers can turn their hand; as there is much less competition with regard to them than with regard to less valuable fabrics, they command their prices in the markets at all times, and might even bring higher prices than any of the manufactures of Paisley, and accordingly, even without any stipulated regulation between the weavers and the manufacturers, wages in Edinburgh are equally as good as in the higher department of silk-weaving in Paisley. I have however no hesitation in saying, that in the other departments of silk-weaving, without something like a board of trade, prices could nowhere at present be maintained, and that if the manufactures of Edinburgh were as various as those of Paisley, prices would be a good deal lower in the former place than they now are.

Those small manufacturers who produce goods from stolen wefts, and are styled Bowl manufacturers, are the means of depressing the market price of goods generally. This effect many Glasgow manufacturers ascribe to the quantity of the bowl manufacture, but I am certainly of opinion that it does not altogether proceed from that cause; the quantity of that manufacture does not constitute possibly one-fortieth of the entire hand-loom manufacture; the depressive influence of the little manufacturer in a great measure arises from his always paying a shade lower than the regular manufacturer, and his being thereby enabled to bring his goods cheaper into the market. We accordingly conceive, that a law to compel the bowl manufacturers to pay as high as others would soon cut up a great number of the former.

Such a law would also put an end to the differences between masters and men, to the strikes and to the trades' unions that now too commonly prevail. Under all their distresses, however, the hand-loom weavers have submitted patiently; they have not, in a single instance, excited either riot or disturbance, or been the occasion of destroying even a shilling's worth of property.

In comparison of those who sell their goods generally for home consumption, our exporting manufacturers are few in number. In a case respecting weavers' wages, and which was tried at Glasgow in 1812, it was made clear to the Court by the weavers' counsel, Mr. Jeffrey, since Lord Advocate for Scotland, that three-fourths of our manufactures are consumed in this country. Now, though there is no doubt that the exporting of the other one-fourth has the effect of pulling down those three-fourths also, I do still think that a small increase in the value of goods would not be the cause of one ell less being exported. At the same time, such an increase would conduce considerably to the welfare of at least three-fourths of the trade. The very weavers themselves, and their families, could then go into the market, and purchase the double of what they now do; and, besides, many articles of provision which they cannot now purchase. Neither can I imagine that in this case it would be possible for the foreigner to undersell us in the home market: abroad, as well as at home, a ruinous competition is carried on; whenever a manufacturer makes a bad or unprofitable sale, an encroachment upon the wages of his workmen is his principal means of making up the deficiency; the foreign weaver, therefore, has as much reason as we have to complain of the low rate of wages. Were any start in the value of goods to take place here, it would have a very good chance of being followed up wherever hand-looms are found in Europe and America; and thus in the case of a rise of wages, the prices of goods would remain relatively the same as at present. An equalization of prices would accordingly be the means of preventing excessive and ruinous competition at home and abroad; and though His Majesty's Government, who are as enlightened as we, and possibly much more so, may have other views of that measure, we can see no other remedy which could ever prove the means of producing the same beneficial effect.

Raising the value of labour would have a great tendency to regulate the supply according to the demand, to do away with the necessity of producing so much as we now do, and thus to shorten dull seasons. At present, when the market is overstocked, and when trade accordingly takes a turn of dullness, the merchants calculate upon a reduction of prices, hold off in expectation of it; and in this way possibly protract the dullness till an absolute demand for goods compels them to purchase.

We do not complain of over-production: an abundant production, if properly distributed, so far from being injurious, is a blessing to society. Neither do we complain of a redundancy of hands: were the wages of labour so regulated that the hands could consume a sufficiency of what they produce, there would not be any such thing as a redundancy of those hands, however numerous the population might be. Were every one to have enough, no one need care who had all the rest, even though every thing were as plentiful as water. As little is it any complaint with us, that the introduction of machinery has thrown us out of employment, and that we cannot get anything to do: at present all our hands have full employment; and from this I would infer that there is no superabundance of weavers. What we complain of is, that production is not properly distributed, and that the workman has no inheritance in the soil of the country. But I am afraid many gentlemen mistake our views, and imagine we seek to better our condition by a revolutionary interference with the rights of property; none, however, but the wildest among us ever had any idea of such a thing as an Agrarian law; and with the weavers at large, a wish for a general distribution is quite out of the question. When we speak of a distribution of property, it is in reference to the workman's labour, which we consider to be his property, and a property for which his right to be remunerated, and by which his right to live, is as good as that supplied by the property of the landed gentleman. We think

think that some species of equalization of wages, with regard to all the workmen of the country, would be a good thing: and that it would equalize production, and make supply and demand go hand in hand together. Still I would equalize only so far as was necessary to the support and comfort of life. Thus, in particular we ask for boards of trade, as an effectual means of obtaining better wages, and of thereby becoming larger consumers of what is produced. When labour was amply rated, and well paid for, I never heard any complaint or observation about a redundancy of hands; and if all engaged in labour could live and support their families, I am certain there would be still no such complaint or observation. I am clearly of opinion that the country is at present richer in property than it ever was; that, provided that property were diffused in such a manner as that every one would get enough, there are now more means for all to live than at any former period, and that all the people, taken collectively, have as good means just now as ever they possessed of being made comfortable and happy.

Boards could have no effect in raising the rate of wages for weaving those fabrics which are capable of being executed by the power-loom. Raising the weavers' wages would not increase the temptation that now exists to invent new machinery; to produce certain fabrics by power would cost a good deal of more expense than to produce them by hand. Book-muslins have been attempted, but the attempt has failed; and to execute the draw-loom productions by power would be very intricate indeed; but still I do not certainly know to what extent invention may be stimulated, and may actually proceed. I should nevertheless think, that the tendency of power-looms to reduce wages would have been counteracted if wages had been regulated so as to increase the consumption in the ratio of the increase of production. I also think, that when production becomes more than enough, it becomes just as injurious to society as when it is too little. You will forgive me when I state, that the landed interest in this country has a powerful protection in the corn laws; but that I have not the least doubt that were there to be made in chemistry any discovery which might make corn or wheat as plentiful as water, and thus lower the incomes of the aristocracy, an Act of Parliament would be made to smother the discovery in its birth.*

William Buchanan, Glasgow.—I am a hand-loom weaver of light muslins; but in the course of my time I have wrought various branches of plain work. I agree generally with the evidence of Hugh Mackenzie.

Without some protection to the weaver, a repeal of the corn laws would be of little or no avail to him; any reduction in the price of provisions would be taken advantage of by the manufacturers. This would be the case in Glasgow, owing to the great number of its manufacturers, and to a great many of them being unprincipled men. The natural consequence, moreover, of bringing foreign corn into competition with that of our own growth, would be to increase the distress at home. I am perfectly well aware that just now labourers on land and persons engaged in agricultural pursuits are, as well as the hand-loom weavers, suffering great distress. When the agriculturist or any other person around us is depressed, we feel the effect of it upon our trade; our best customers come not to the field to purchase our articles. Our substantial articles are consumed in the home market, and we therefore consider it to be the best. Still, on the other hand, we could not expect much advantage from any possible improvement in the condition of the agriculturist, unless we had also a board of trade or an extraordinary demand.

Were our wages, however, increased to a small amount only, it would be a great improvement, not merely to the weaver and to his employer, but also to such as furnish both with food and other necessaries. In this case, the agriculturist who might live in the neighbourhood of a thriving village, would find a great alteration in that village. Taking the duty off raw cotton might be of some benefit to the weaver; taking also the duty off starch, of which sometimes in the course of a month he consumes a considerable quantity, would be a small relief to him; and I have no doubt that lowering the stamp-duty upon indentures to 2*s.*, and thereby facilitating apprenticeships for five or seven years, would keep down the number of weavers.

We in general consider that the low prices of goods and wages arise, in a great measure, from the mismanagement of Government; and the unfortunate spirit of discontent which this consideration generates among us increases and gains strength in consequence of our being always informed that the Parliament say they can do nothing in our behalf. The majority of the manufacturers of Glasgow are yet honest, and I am confident would rejoice if the Government were to take any steps by which the workman might be placed in a better condition. Unless, however, our wages can be advanced by some interference of the Legislature, those in general who employ us consider our case altogether hopeless. For the last two years, therefore, our whole attention has been directed to Parliament; and it is our decided opinion, that to pass an enactment favourable to us, is just now within the power of Government. We have, indeed, a precedent for applying to Government for protection at the present time; protection is afforded to the landholder, to the manufacturer, and in different other instances. Then why should not we, as the manufacturers' labourers, be protected too? We consider that if any class have a right to be protected, it is the hand-loom weavers of the present day; their situation ought to command the sympathy of those in power; Government ought to be a fostering father to them. Besides, our proposed plan of protection is so simple, that the Legislature ought to adopt it

There should be a good understanding between the weaver and the manufacturer; the weaving body, generally, are too intelligent to demand anything that would be prejudicial to the interests of their masters. Our demands are undoubtedly moderate; we merely ask of Parliament to extend its arms to bring those manufacturers who are unprincipled men under some regulating law.

In the city and suburbs of Glasgow, a great number of weavers have become manufacturers, and are called Small Corks. Commonly, each cork employs from two to twenty weavers; he who employs no more than six, may be personally occupied in weaving; whereas, in general, he who employs 15, walks about conducting the business. These corks pay a great deal less than the regular manufacturing houses. There is a good number of examples of a single weaver purchasing the chain or web, and manufacturing it on his own account. All these small manufacturers sell their goods

* Anxiety to do justice to the enlightened and liberal views of every one of the witnesses has already occasioned several repetitions; a necessary attention, however, to brevity, now admonishes us that in classifying the remaining evidence, unless there is something new or striking in the statement, no notice can be taken of any fact or opinion previously and fairly exhibited in the Analysis.

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goods into what are called Cash-houses. We undoubtedly consider this system, which has sprung up within these few years, and is daily on the increase, to be very prejudicial to our trade in general. Now one of the principal advantages of a board would be, that the wages paid by the small corks would be brought up to the level of respectable houses. Better wages would also induce the weaver who works for himself merely, to cease doing so, and to go as formerly for work to the regular warehouse.

Were Government to enact some regulating law for 12 months only, and to try it as an experiment merely, undoubtedly the weavers of Glasgow would be perfectly well pleased; and were the experiment found not to work well, they would have sufficient intelligence to give up altogether the idea of regulating prices.

James M'Ewen, Cotton weaver, Perth.—I cannot say there is betwixt Mr. Stalker and myself much difference in opinion with respect to either the proposed boards of trade or trade in general; I cannot say but that I acquiesced in the whole that he said.

I have known work taken out at a lower rate than the usual one by country weavers, probably because they occupied a piece of ground on which they could grow provisions. Still the price of provisions forms only a part of our complaint; the tailor, the shoemaker, and every tradesman around us, take even war prices. Were provisions as cheap in this country as in France, we, who could work as well as the weavers of that country, would consequently be as comfortable as they.

I think the weavers of Perth and its neighbourhood have decreased a little. In summer the young and stout men of the villages often undertake field-labour; and in harvest a great number of both men and women go out of the town, and find work in the country, and thereby occasion a slackness in many warehouses. Numbers just leave the town altogether, and engage in various occupations; permanent employment, however, in other trades, is what the weaving body generally have no hope of finding. I have known mechanics who were not engaged in weaving, and who ultimately destined their children for some other trade, take the advantage of obtaining a little money by means of putting those very children at an early age to the weaving. Still, to put his children to that trade, is not worth the while of any one who can help it. Accordingly, of the weavers' children in Perth a few have gone to the cotton-spinning at Stanley and Cromwell Park, about five miles off; and a number have been put out as apprentices to shoemakers, who for a day or two in certain seasons of the year are out of work, and whose wages at the same time are never broken.

The unsteadiness of trade for some time past has really wrought hard upon us, and flattened our feelings considerably. If possible, however, we would like wages to be steady. And the greater part of the people who sent me here anticipate from a board of trade, not any rise of wages, but merely a cessation of the sickly fluctuation that has often brought us to hardship.

With regard to boards, the commercial and manufacturing and operative parts of the community should be respectively consulted; the manufacturers should consult the merchants with respect to the foreign and home departments of the trade, and then the operatives should consult with the manufacturers, and by such an arrangement the parties would come to a general understanding, which would be profitable to all classes.

Were an equalization of wages to take place, any manufacturer would see that by his selling at a disadvantage, as the circumstance could not fail to be discovered by other manufacturers, he was in the fair way to lose either his capital or his credit.

The operatives have no inclination to compel the manufacturers, neither do they wish the Legislature to compel them, to the destruction of the manufacturing interests; whether it is high or low, the price should stand with the foreigner. If it can be fairly shown that the foreign manufactures can be sold cheaper than ours, we are willing to come down to the level of the foreigner; but we do not wish our manufacturers to offer as they now do their goods, as a temptation to the buyer, so much below foreigners.

As an inferior article can only bring an inferior price, the manufacturer cannot, without sinking a part of his capital by bad goods, pay as high wages to an imperfect tradesman as to an expert one; and of these two, the former can never expect the same remuneration as the latter. For instance, in 1808, harness-weaving was introduced into Perth; and for some time, as that kind of work could not be done as well as at Paisley or Edinburgh, our wages were considerably lower than in the west country. The same thing takes place at the first introduction into any place of every one of the fabrics with which I am acquainted. But whenever a mechanic in any district can make as good work as the mechanic in any other district, he is entitled to the same payment; and accordingly, as soon as we, who had commenced harness-weaving in Perth, could produce an article equal to that of our fellow-workmen elsewhere, our wages were raised to the level of theirs. The only distinction betwixt us and the harness-weavers of Paisley or Edinburgh is, that we have to pay for carriage and and other local expenses, and for these we pay willingly. I am certain that the weavers and the manufacturers, if acting together in a board of trade, would never have the smallest difficulty in agreeing as to the rate of wages that should be paid to those who were unpractised hands at any fabric; upon this score, the operative would never quarrel with the manufacturer. We consider that our work can get on at Perth by means only of the introduction of new fabrics; and on this principle, we are always fond of new fabrics, and of new manufacturers coming to the place. For instance, at this present time, we are fond, as a flax-mill is being established in the town, and as the linen yarn which it will produce will give employment to the old men that were thrown out of work by the power-looms.

Lawrence Don, Aberdeen.—I have woven linen and cotton goods for about 32 years. No class of mechanics in His Majesty's dominions is more respectable than the weavers of Aberdeen; they are peaceable, willing to work, industrious, and in fact labour very hard. And I do think that it would be more important to raise their wages a little than even to build additional churches for them: our churches are not half filled; and the weavers, if they were willing, could attend them. But there is something very material now at work within the breasts of the weavers of our town; they are becoming very dissatisfied and turbulent, and if something is not done for them their dissatisfaction will break out in some way or other; and I would rather be inclined to think that if the Legislature should not give them help they would be disposed, though I should think it a very wrong thing, to try to help themselves in some other way; but I do believe in my very heart, that if they got wages adequate to their decent maintenance, there would be a much better state of things existing in Aberdeen than at present; and that even if they saw the experiment of legislatively raising wages fairly tried, they would be more attached to Parliament than they now are. They wish among

among other things to see imposed upon the power-looms a tax, amounting to the same sum that they themselves have to pay upon the necessaries of life and other taxed articles.

I recollect the existence of what was called the Trustees of the Linen Board of Scotland. I am not thoroughly acquainted with their laws, which at any rate, as I believe, are not now in operation; still I do think that those laws never had any bad effect, and that they were well calculated to encourage manufacturing. But above all things, in order to raise the prices of weaving, and to do away with a great deal of the disagreeable feeling that now exists between the parties, the manufacturers and the weavers must meet together in a board. I would have three boards for Scotland; one at Aberdeen, another at Dundee, and the third at Glasgow; all differences in any board to be referred to the arbitration of the grand board in London. I have however no doubt that it would be difficult to get some of the manufacturers to comply with any such regulations.

This last observation, coupled with the answers to the following queries, furnishes a pretty good argument in favour of the principle of Mr. Fielden's plan of regulating the prices of weaving.

Do you think it would be a good plan if the Government were to get a return of the prices of weaving in all parts of the empire, and then to take the highest rate paid by any manufacturer in any branch of weaving as the lowest rate that anybody should be allowed to give?—Yes, I think it would be a very good thing that.

You think that if it was proved that such a manufacturer was paying such a price, and still continuing in trade and doing well, that that is of itself sufficient evidence that manufacturers could generally pay better prices if they were disposed to do so?—Yes, I think so.

Do you think there would be any difficulty in getting a return of those prices of weaving from the manufacturers in Aberdeen?—No, not at all if you ordered it; the weavers could not obtain it.

But in the event of the manufacturers refusing to give such information, suppose it was merely asked, without the Government insisting upon it, could not the weavers prove something of it themselves?—Yes, they could prove the prices.

So that in the event of the manufacturers refusing to give the necessary information, you think Parliament would be able to get so near it that they might form some opinion as to the fact?—Yes.

Do you think the manufacturers, being sensible of this, would at once give the information required rather than after refusing it, when they know it can be got from their workmen?—I rather think they would comply.

Do you not think, in case the workpeople were making improper returns, that the manufacturers would show their prices, to show the reverse?—I am not so sure of that, whether they would show their prices.

The prices of working, not the prices of sale?—Yes, I think they would do that.*

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3. *Remedies proposed by Individuals engaged in the Silk Manufacture.*

The Silk-Weavers.

AMONG the witnesses examined by the Committee, we find *James Orr*, silk-gauze weaver, Paisley; *Thomas Paul*, harness-weaver, Glasgow; and *John Wilkie*, plain-silk weaver, Kilbarchan, near Paisley.

Corn Laws.

John Wilkie.—Were the corn laws abrogated, and the principles of free trade operated upon out and out, the hand-loom weavers would need no protection, and would ask none.

Tax upon Apprentices' Indentures.

James Orr.—The present stamp-duty upon indentures may be said not to be paid at all by weavers, as few, scarcely any, of their apprentices are under an indenture; every one of these, however, would be under one, were the duty reduced to a moderate sum.

John Wilkie.—The Paisley weavers' committee are anxious for the abolition of the duty on apprentices' indentures. They think that the duty should at least be lowered, and that a small duty would raise a larger revenue than the present high one, especially in the case of weavers' indentures. At present, an indenture costs nearly 30 *s.*; the stamp being about 20 *s.*, and the charge for extending from 7 *s.* to 10 *s.* This amounts almost to a prohibition of apprentices to the hand-loom weaving. The masters, however, evade the law, by taking apprentices without indentures; and just now, out of 800 apprentices in Paisley, only four are bound by indentures. But as a weaver generally receives the half of his apprentices' earnings, and as any master who may do so is liable for the penalty, which in such a case may be imposed for the protection of the stamp-duty, and which amounts to 10 *l.*, consequently 99 out of every 100 masters in Paisley are liable for that penalty. And though I never knew of a case where the penalty was exacted, still the masters are in the disagreeable condition of being liable for it. Were indentures containing the usual regulations prepared by the Stamp-office, and directly issued to the weavers, at a sum of from 4 *s.* to 5 *s.*, the arrangement would be very desirable, and thus obviate law expenses. Besides this, a small duty, by more readily disposing the weavers to bind their apprentices, would, I am convinced, be ten times more productive to the revenue than the existing duty. But independently of these considerations, encouraging masters to bind their apprentices would be for the interest of the trade itself; and what is of more consequence, would be very beneficial in a moral point of view to society generally. No apprentice should be permitted to become his own master until he is 17 years of age, and this is now one of the rules of the associated weavers. But without an indenture the master has no legal control over his apprentice; of this the latter very soon becomes aware; and whenever interest or inclination dictates such a step,

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* We have hitherto given each witness's evidence separately and minutely; this, however, requires so much time and labour, that in future, we shall be obliged to content ourselves with a separate, general and comparative exhibition of the evidence of each class only of witnesses.

PART IV. REMEDIES FOR THE DISTRESS.

a step, he sets the master at defiance, and leaving him, either commences to work for himself, and is consequently a very inefficient tradesman; or goes to another master, and thus changes from master to master, until he acquires very loose and abandoned habits.

Tax upon Machinery.

James Orr.—Were the taxes taken off all those articles of which a hand-loom weaver and his family make use, and a direct tax, to the amount of what he now pays in indirect taxes, laid upon his loom, and also upon every power-loom, the power-looms would be stopped in a week; then the hand-loom weavers' wages would rise, and consequently the power-looms would again begin their operations. Such a tax, however, upon machinery, would be merely an act of justice.

Tax upon French Manufactured Silks.

James Orr.—In the imitation India shawl trade, the manufacturers generally are of opinion that their goods should be admitted into France on terms equal to those on which similar articles are admitted from that country into this one, and that on such terms they could go advantageously into the French market. But as there is no market in France for articles in the other branches of the silk trade, the manufacturers of those articles are of opinion that the importation of like articles from that country should be altogether prohibited, or at least put under reasonable restrictions. In 1829 the Paisley weavers petitioned Parliament, that if French manufactured silks were to continue to be admitted at a duty of 30 per cent., foreign corn also should be admitted at the same rate of duty. In Paisley we look almost entirely to the home market for the sale of our manufactures.

Boards of Trade.

James Orr.—We have a regulating system by means of tables of prices. The silk-gauze table has been in operation for one year; the one for work in the heavy line, for two years; the one for trimmings, for three years; and the one for other kinds of plain work, for nearly four years. Both the reformed and the unreformed magistracy have given us the most ample certificates *(handing them in)* of the utility of the tables. At present, one of the magistrates and two of the councillors are manufacturers.

There have been complaints of manufacturers endeavouring to give out work below the table prices in the silk-gauze department, but not in any other. Disputes indeed have arisen frequently, but merely regarding misunderstandings about the nature of the engagement, bad materials, badly finished work, or the like.

The manufacturers generally allow that the tables are not injurious to the trade; and every manufacturer to whom I have spoken upon the subject admits, that it would have been of no advantage to the trade to have had the prices lower than they now are for the time fixed. Still the manufacturer does not find the same interest as the weaver in supporting the tables, and hence the protecting of these depends upon the weavers entirely; and when any infringement is made, the weavers being of course the complainers, the manufacturers moving in a higher sphere, get irritated at their interference. The weavers, however, would be perfectly willing to give up much of this interference if the manufacturers would take the matter under their own management. During the last 25 years, had the manufacturers felt it to have been their interest to have had a protecting committee of their own, and had there been in existence a committee consisting solely of manufacturers, excluding all weavers, and having even no connexion whatever with the latter, the manufacturers, as a body, would never have agreed to reduce prices to the extent that they have been reduced by unconnected individuals underselling one another; and accordingly the weavers could have gone on almost without their own committee, or any other local board.

Our great difficulty therefore is, that we have in our voluntary system of regulation nothing to bind those manufacturers who do not find it to their advantage to keep up the tables. Unfortunately for that system, it is merely an understanding among the manufacturers, that they shall adhere to a particular table; a thing to which two or three leading houses could in a week put an end, and which, if the Government interfere not in behalf of the defenceless weavers, will not endure. In all other respects, however, our system is calculated to prove effective, and has accordingly hitherto worked well.

I do not think that manufacturers are a worse class than others. In Paisley there are nearly 200 of the former; but of these I have never found one who did not approve of the tables, and express a wish that the support now given to them might be continued; one told me that he would like to see them sanctioned by law, and enforced by penalties. All of the few whom I know would cordially agree to support boards approved of by Parliament; the majority, provided they can just carry on their business from day to day, do not attend much to such matters; and in fact only ten individuals stood out, and that but for a short time, against our tables. Moreover, owing to various causes, and among others to dislike at the weavers interfering so much as they now do with the manufacturers, the latter, as a body, are not in a connected state at present. Their objection to boards is the inconvenience and trouble, and loss of time, which being obliged to attend and to hear the complaints and disputes that may arise at such boards, may impose upon the members thereof.

Boards would not need much machinery. In 1824 the Legislature passed an Arbitration Act, for settling disputes between masters and workmen, and for this purpose providing that every disputed case shall be examined and decided upon by one master and one workman; and that in any case in which these two shall not agree in their decision, the magistrate who gave them the order to decide the case in question shall act as umpire. This Act has been productive of the very best effects. In the present case, therefore, all that is necessary is to extend the Arbitration Act; to empower the local authorities to convene the manufacturers and weavers, or six or more from each of these classes, for the purpose of fixing the prices of weaving betwixt themselves; and further, to empower the local authorities, as the most competent arbiters, to fix the prices in every case in which the contending parties cannot come to any agreement. Such a plan, I think, would be effectual; at least, I would like to see it fairly tried; and if it should prove ineffectual, I would be quite willing to give it up, and to try something better.

A board would improve the comfort and the moral condition of the inhabitants generally of Paisley. Boards also, wherever instituted, would have a great tendency to put the weavers in a settled condition. The longer, however, that they continue in their present depressed state, their unsettled habits will become more confirmed; and to restore them to their former station in society will

will require more time. The weavers' children, not being now brought up with the same care as formerly, are likely to become, in regard to moral qualities, to industrious habits, and to loyalty and attachment to the country, a very inferior description of persons.

Thomas Paul.—All the silk manufacturers in Glasgow, with the exception of a single individual who adhered to our tables for a few days only, approve of our regulations. I have letters (*handing them in*) approving of those regulations, from five of the most respectable houses; and had it been necessary, the other houses, with the exception now mentioned, would have given similar letters. The application of our regulations to all the branches of the cotton manufacture would be beneficial to them.

Boards might induce many weavers to leave Glasgow for Belfast, where living is cheaper than in the former place; and without hurting the trade of Scotland, would improve the condition of the Irish. Or were the manufacturers of Glasgow disinclined to send work to Belfast, the weavers there could soon and easily transfer themselves to the former place; but the silk manufacturers there would have no inducement to promote such a transfer. They have already sunk in the expensive mountings necessary for, as is generally supposed, about 150 weavers in Belfast, a heavy capital, which it will require a long time to refund.

John Wilkie.—We have reaped much benefit from our regulations, and are anxious that they should get the sanction of Parliament. Among other things, our regulations have produced a good understanding between the operatives and the manufacturers; and if extended to the cotton trade generally, would in that case have the same harmonious effect. So long as the present partial system of free trade is acted upon, we are convinced that boards are the only remedy for the evils of which we complain, and that they would be beneficial. And till their inefficiency is demonstrated by a practical experiment, we will never be satisfied without them.

Cotton Manufacturers.

By referring to the evidence of the cotton manufacturers, we find that four individuals of that class were examined, namely, *John Kingan*, esq., who was formerly a cotton manufacturer in Glasgow, but has ceased to be so for a period extending from 15 to 20 years; *William Craig*, esq., Glasgow, a manufacturer of handkerchiefs, ginghams, and various other coloured cotton goods; Mr. *Robert Galloway*, Lanark, manufacturer chiefly of publicates, ginghams, coarse checks and stripes, but, to judge from the tenor of his evidence, an agent for manufacturers in Glasgow; and Mr. *Thomas Mallock*, who resides in a country district near Lanark, has been a weaver for 45 years, was formerly engaged in the same branch in which Mr. Galloway now is, and is now apparently an agent also for manufacturers in Glasgow.

Corn Laws.

Mr. *Kingan.*—A removal of the restrictions upon the free importation of corn would be generally beneficial. Cheap corn gives now new power to the manufacturer to reduce wages; on the contrary, it is equivalent to an increase upon wages. Practically, wages always fall as corn rises, and in particular fell more than they had ever formerly done during the great dearth of 1799. When corn is very cheap a man will labour four or five days only in the week, and thus decrease the quantity of labour in the market. Cheap corn would not affect any of the agricultural classes, saving the landlord; neither would it affect in any great degree the sale of those finer manufactures which are fitted for the higher classes; and it would besides enable the farmers, and other classes dependent upon them, to buy more of our manufactures.

Mr. *Craig.*—A free trade in corn would be universally beneficial. By enabling the manufacturer to work cheaper, it would be beneficial to him, and would very soon have a re-acting influence upon agricultural productions, by causing a larger consumption of them. As any sudden alteration in an existing state of things is apt to produce disadvantage for the moment; a repeal of the corn laws might, in the first instance, produce some derangement; it might have the effect of throwing inferior soils out of cultivation; but as the great manufacturing districts would have more money, they would consume more of the produce of the dairy and of the grazing farms, and thus ultimately a free trade in corn would not be so much to the disadvantage of agriculture as many persons suppose.

Mr. *Mallock.*—If the duty upon foreign corn could by any means be taken off, it would be advantageous to the manufacturing interests. At the same time, the prospect of a free importation of foreign grain need not occasion any gloomy apprehensions regarding our own agricultural interests; the landholders will find for themselves an equivalent for the present corn laws. They have a great preponderance in both houses of the Legislature even in a reformed Parliament, and consequently, the power of ridding themselves by some means or other of the pressure of taxation. For this purpose they could reduce the interest upon the national debt in proportion to the change in the currency, and could reduce likewise in a similar ratio the salaries of all public men.

Tax upon Cotton.

Mr. *Craig.*—Without some regulating principle, taking off the tax upon cotton would not directly benefit the weaver.

Tax upon Power-Looms.

Mr. *Galloway.*—The power-looms should be made to contribute to the exigencies of the State in something like the proportion contributed by the hand-loom weavers.

Mr. *Mallock.*—Fresh taxes should if possible be avoided; justice, however, requires that the power-looms should be taxed equally with the hand-loom weavers, and so long as these have to pay taxes.

Mr. *Craig.*—The inroads of mechanical power are beyond the reach of any interference. If no other way of protecting hand-loom weaving could be devised, a tax should be imposed upon mechanical power; but taking the duties off excisable commodities would be preferable to such a tax. Mechanical power has not affected hand-loom weaving to the extent that some persons might imagine; the cotton trade has increased to a very great extent since the power-loom began its operations.

PART IV. REMEDIES FOR THE DISTRESS.

Reducing the Number of Operatives.

Mr. *Kingan*.—What do you mean by reducing the number of weavers?—The most obvious and humane way is to prevent persons from entering into it, and in the course of nature a certain number die every year, and many are driven out of it to other work by these low rates of wages. The proportion of demand for labour is regulated in masons, carpenters, slaters and shoemakers, &c. &c., and if the numbers were proportioned to the demand as it is in those trades, the wages of hand-loom weavers would be the same.

Would you recommend the system of apprentices to be restored as a check?—It is beyond my power to think of what would be wise in that respect, but I am quite convinced that if any check in the introduction of young people into that trade could be instituted, it would be beneficial, for the reasons I have given for going into it are so powerful you need not wonder at the great numbers who have gone that we find in it.

Boards of Trade.

Mr. *Galloway*.—Some very respectable manufacturers in Glasgow have frequently lamented the mischievous effects which the operations of manufacturers of small capital have produced upon both manufacturers and tradesmen. Boards merit a trial, and from such a trial no evil would likely result.

Mr. *Mallock*.—Fixing a minimum rate of wages for the purpose, not of raising them, but of preventing their further depression, would be doubtless advantageous. The rise in wages which would necessarily and gradually flow from such a measure might be trusted to the course of events.

Mr. *Kingan*.—This witness's ideas of a board seem to have been chiefly derived from the reconciling courts of Denmark.

Have you ever heard that there existed in Denmark a tribunal which was called a reconciling court?—Yes, I have heard of it: and I have thought that a board would be advantageously formed upon the principle of that court.

Are you aware, if in those reconciling courts in Denmark there are any penalties allotted to the decision of the reconciling court?—The reconciling court is wholly for the settlement of civil causes between subjects; but the principle of it is, that the parties themselves come before a magistrate, tell their own story in the outset, and without any legal assistance, and neither party is bound by the decision of the judge, but practically it turns out that nine cases out of ten are so settled; and I think if the points at issue between workmen and masters were brought before a court in which both sides, and above all, the public, have confidence, that neither party would have the face to go in the teeth of what they had recommended.

You stated that in these boards of regulation, that should consist of manufacturers and operatives, there should be another class in those boards, who would be a sort of arbitrator between them?—Yes, but forming one body. I would give them no superiority over members further than this, that if an equal number of masters and men were upon it, they should unite in electing two or three persons to sit with them, and to form part of the court or jury; and these men ought to be, and I think it would be advantageous to have them, professional men; perhaps writers, or solicitors as you call them here, or barristers, if there were any. I do not see why a clergyman would not be a useful man in such a place.

In a board of 12 persons, he whom the other 11 could not make to comply with a requisition to uphold wages would be a very obstinate fellow indeed.

Boards are extremely desirable, and even practicable, and would arrange some general principles; but ingenuity will always defeat general laws. To fix every thing specifically as you do rates on a tollbar would be quite impossible; specific regulations of prices can be brought about by mutual bargains only between the parties, and when it is conducive to the interest of both, no board or any other act can prevent an agreement.

Both parties would have so much honour and character as to succumb to the advice of the board. A manufacturer, who was a member of a board, would be specially tied by its decisions; and public opinion, and respect for their own character, would be quite sufficient with the other manufacturers, who generally, as a body of men, are quiet, industrious, straightforward, moderate, and not speculators. At present prices are not so manifest as they would be made by a board; they are the result of private opinion and private conduct only; but, sanctioned by a public act, they would carry with them a weight which would add proportionally to the disgrace of a man who would go in the teeth of them.

The only other check of which I am aware to the fraudulent contravention of the decisions of boards, would be the infliction of penalties; but to resort to these, so far from being an enactment either wise or effectual, would be a doubtful, strong and severe step; they would likely do no good, and might cause a great deal of evil and litigation and ill-feeling; they could be enforced by a magistrate only, and this would load the parties with an expensive process. Manufacturers cannot be compelled to give out work, and therefore penalties, instead of benefiting the workman, might even deprive him of employment.

The very best use of boards would be to produce more harmony between masters and men, and to operate as a sort of safety-valve to those bitter feelings and animosities which now naturally arise among the working classes, distressed and harassed as they are, and in dreadful want of the necessaries of life. In these hard times, the workman is too apt to look upon his employer as heartless and greedy, and therefore hostile, envious and malicious feelings are very universal among all classes of operatives. A system of regulation in the cotton trade, if adopted in Glasgow, would throughout the whole of Scotland, in the first place, quiet the minds of the workmen that are at present most dissatisfied, and eventually introduce an uniformity in acting, and a kindliness of feeling, between the two classes, that would be beneficial to both.

Mr. *Craig*.—So far as relates to Scotland, the home and foreign trade are nearly equal. Foreign competition is beyond the reach of any interference; home competition and some other matters are not. No other means of relief would be so salutary and advantageous as boards.

Except the operatives are a party to any arrangement, it would not be satisfactory to them. Of the manufacturers in Glasgow, many are favourable to the regulating principle, and many are not; the objection of those who are unfavourable is directed more to the regulating principle itself than to any legislative penalties for its violation; voluntary boards, therefore, would not be effectual over the

the country: without penalties the regulating principle could not be maintained. As compared with another pattern, a very great difference in the cost of production to the manufacturer, and also in the trouble necessary to proper execution on the part of the weaver, may be occasioned by a very slight difference of pattern; those two points, however, might to a certain extent be actually determined and decided upon by a board. Manufacturers would no doubt feel very considerable jealousy in exposing very valuable details as to the rate at which they were producing their particular patterns; but there is no general law, however advantageous, that would not be open to some difficulties in detail.

A board in Glasgow might answer the purpose generally for the cotton manufacture for Scotland; but were it not for increasing the expense of management, boards in different places would be perhaps an advantage. Differences betwixt the masters and the men should be decided by neutral persons, appointed by the Legislature. A barrister would not be a proper arbiter; he is not generally supposed to have taken much interest in matters concerning the details of trade and manufacture. Persons possessed of a competent knowledge, not only of local details, but also of commercial concerns generally, would be better arbiters than persons merely local. To give an intelligent award, the arbiters should be acquainted with all matters of trade and commerce; and if they could be had gratuitously, it would perhaps be better than with salaries. The manufacturer of plain goods would not be a competent judge of harness-weaving; consequently boards should be divided into sections, each section being charged with a particular department of the trade.

In many cases, except they could give sufficient reasons for a reduction, manufacturers would not, under the circumstance of there being a place of appeal, so far reduce wages as they now do; and therefore, in every such case the very existence of boards would have the effect of preventing their being called into operation, and of thus rendering themselves unnecessary.

Without frequent communications between the various boards, with a view to establish as nearly as possible an uniformity of prices, the boards themselves could not be made effectual. Differences betwixt local boards could be decided by a third party, appointed for the three kingdoms.

The weavers are a numerous body, but, except in particular periods of distress, generally employed. With a view to being enabled to carry on their business, persons who find a loss upon their goods abroad often have recourse to a reduction of wages; but if they were kept from thus reducing the prices of weaving, they would be more inclined than they now are to suspend unprofitable transactions. This would diminish neither the demand, nor consequently the rate of wages, and only confine the former to the hands of people who had property, who would be careful of it, and who, though they might produce the same quantity of work, would take care that it should not be squandered, as it is but too often done by the present mode of consignment. With regard to the branch of trade in which I am engaged, as it is in an unnatural state at present, and as, but for the ruinous competition that subsists, I would be able, without being in a worse condition in the foreign market, to afford my workmen better wages; the rate of wages should not be regulated by the rate of profits at present, or at the time at which the rate of wages is fixed.

As far as circumstances would admit, wages in Ireland and Scotland should be nearly equal; still the rate of wages is not so very material as to cause us great embarrassment; though the prices of weaving were a little lower in Belfast than in Glasgow, that circumstance would be compensated by this other one, that the work done in the former place is very inferior to the work done in the latter. Thus the prices at which the goods would be produced would be comparatively the same in both countries, and therefore the Irish manufacturers would not be able to undersell ours in any third market. No doubt the Irish manufacturers would be more averse than ours are to boards; our cheap machinery and other advantages would make the former apprehensive that legislative regulations might check their infant cotton manufacture, which has been substituted for the linen one; but to limit the infant cotton manufacture of Ireland would be a lesser evil than continuing that manufacture by a system calculated to spread ruin and starvation over the subjects of his Majesty's other dominions.

Boards would have a most direct tendency to promote good will and harmony between the employer and the employed, and tend very much to do away with the cause of trades' unions. Farther, raising the weavers' wages would increase the number of hands producing for exportation, and, by raising the prices of agricultural produce, would also increase the demand for agricultural labourers, and thus in both ways hold out an inducement to an extension of population.

The Silk Manufacturers.

The other witnesses examined by the Committee were Mr. *John Stalker*, manufacturer formerly of linen and cotton goods, now of harness goods, ginghams and publicates, Perth; *Thomas Davidson*, Esq., manufacturer of fancy lappet goods and harness zebras, and Mr. *William Aitken*, harness manufacturer, both of Glasgow; and Mr. *James Stewart*, harness manufacturer; Mr. *James Forbes*, manufacturer of shawls principally, and *Alexander Campbell*, Esq, sheriff substitute of Renfrewshire, all of Paisley. We have thus classified Mr. Campbell with the witnesses engaged in the silk manufacture, on account of his residence, and on account of his station in society with the manufacturers.

Improvement of the Condition of the People generally.

Mr. *Davidson*.—The improvement of the condition of the great mass of the people is the grand source to which we ought to look for a return to a permanent system of national prosperity. The productive powers of the country may, and it is to be hoped will, be very materially developed and increased by those salutary measures which we expect sooner or later at the hands of a reformed Parliament.

Corn Laws.

Mr. *Davidson*.—In so far as the price of corn is an ingredient, or element, in the composition of the price of other commodities, so far, and no further, would the weaver be benefited by a reduction of the price of corn.

Mr. *Stalker*.—The corn laws and the taxes peculiar to the landed interest should be simultaneously and gradually repealed. By this, the property that has been invested in agriculture upon the faith of the corn laws would be protected; the cost of living in Britain and upon the Continent would be also gradually and more nearly than they are at present equalized, and thus an immense advantage would accrue to the British workman.

PART IV. REMEDIES FOR THE DISTRESS.

Starch and Cotton Wool.

Mr. *Davidson*.—Taking off the taxes upon starch and cotton wool would be advantageous; at the same time I am not aware that these taxes are much complained of, or very seriously felt.

Power-Looms.

Mr. *Davidson*.—The improvements in mechanical power will go on, and will ultimately and altogether supersede hand-loom weaving; we possess not the means of arresting their progress, and ought not to attempt doing so; a machine is a good to society, which loses nothing, but gains in the end by every discovery in, and by every new application of, mechanical power.

Mr. *Stalker*.—To take the taxes off the hand-loom weaver would be better than putting any tax upon the power-loom; directly taxing machinery, or any thing connected with trade, is quite opposed to the general principles entertained in the country as to commerce; still it must be admitted as a general principle, that it would be fair that a piece of goods manufactured by power should pay as much in taxes as a piece of equal price manufactured by the hand.

Emigration.

Mr. *Stalker*.—Were weavers even likely to succeed as they could wish in Canada or elsewhere, they are, in consequence of their previous habits, unqualified to enter upon the work of cultivating rugged land, therefore comparatively few of them leave the country.

Apprentices' Indentures.

Mr. *Stalker*.—Were every apprentice, whether the child of a weaver or not, obliged to enter into an indenture, lowering the stamp duty upon apprentices' indentures would be no loss to the revenue.

Mr. *Campbell*.—Can you inform the Committee what will be the probable expense of drawing up an indenture of apprenticeship for a weaver?—Judging from the few cases which have come under my judicial notice, I think the lowest rate of charge is about 10 *s*. 6 *d*.

Do you think a form of indenture might be printed and sent out from the Stamp-office for a person being apprenticed to a weaver?—I think it might, containing the usual clauses, and then leaving to the parties, if they disagreed to any of those clauses, to strike them out, and to add others suited to their case.

It is propable that any change they might make, if they did pay the expense at all of the indenture, might be arranged for the peculiar circumstances of the parties?—The terms of indentures of apprenticeship to weavers are generally pretty much the same; but it would be very wrong to oblige the parties to adhere to any particular stipulations, because occasionally there may be differences as to the amount of wages, as to the amount of apprentice fee, and other things, such as provisions and clothes. An indenture is a deed which, according to the law of Scotland, must be attested in a particular way to give it legal validity; now if there was a form printed, it would require a legislative enactment to give validity to any other articles that were added, by way of appendix to the printed form. If, as I suppose the Committee means, that the parties be enabled to execute the indenture without having recourse to a law agent, it would be necessary to do away with some of the legal solemnities, or there would be a chance of the deed being invalidated by peculiar stipulations, which the parties might add without professional aid.

Reciprocity.

Mr. *Stewart*.—The Paisley manufacturers wish that, if we continue to admit French goods, British goods should be admitted into France, and think that without such a regulation there can be no reciprocity.

Friendly Societies.

Mr. *Stewart*.—Young weavers, just out of their apprenticeship, being generally in good health, and able to earn as much as at any period of their lives, if they had adequate wages might be easily induced to become, as long as they remained unmarried, members of friendly societies. A Parliamentary recommendation of such a beneficial expedient on the part of the youth of Paisley would have a considerable weight with them, and the more especially, as the circumstance of Parliament now taking their case into consideration shows them that a sympathy for their well-being is felt in the highest quarters. But whether making such an expedient imperative on young men by a coercive enactment would be advisable or not, I cannot say.

Boards of Trade.

Mr. *Davidson*.—In Glasgow two houses only stood out against the harness-weavers' tables; without, however, formally signing these, one of the two houses in question afterwards paid the table prices. The tables have been beneficial to the manufacturer, and I have heard no complaint from any individual as to any evil consequence resulting from them.

Were a legalized system of regulating prices adopted, it would require to possess unity, centralization and uniformity of operation. There should be either general boards, one for England, another for Scotland, and a third for Ireland, or local boards at the seats of the great manufactories of each country. No board, however, should be authorized to determine anything without previously communicating with all the other boards; and though it may perhaps be necessary that boards should in some degree be invested with the power of fixing prices locally, and not generally, it would upon the whole be considerably more advantageous that the prices should be fixed uniformly over the country, and with a relation to the various prices prevalent in the principal seats of the manufacture. Each board would require for an arbiter some official person, connected with neither the manufacturing interest nor the weaving, but appointed and paid by Government. There should also be a central board sitting in London, or in some other part of England, and altogether composed of persons independent, neutral, not connected with either the manufacturing or operative bodies, who might devote

devote their whole attention to general questions connected with wages, and to whom, when it might be impossible for any inferior board to come to a decision upon any given point, a final appeal could be made. Boards, moreover, to be effective, must have a legislative sanction, and should there be any legislation about them at all it must be compulsory.

One very extensive plain manufacturer has expressed to me his desire to see legal boards submitted to the test of an actual experiment; and whilst I am not able to see any materially pernicious tendencies which they could have, I am even of opinion that they would be positively advantageous. They would have the effect of limiting the production of houses of small capital, of bringing that production more within the compass of the means, and of making it more effective for promoting the interest of such houses. Besides, as one of their most beneficial consequences, they would be valuable agencies for the collecting of information regarding the state of wages in this country with a relation to those of other countries, and, generally speaking, regarding all statistical facts bearing upon the theory and practice of wages; they would thus enlighten the public, manufacturing and operative, upon the just principles of wages, and ultimately bring both parties into harmonious accord with respect to all consequences resulting from the action of foreign competition, the progress of mechanical power, and other causes. The proprietors of the soil are the smallest body of consumers; their consumption is not commensurate with their means, but rather with their physical wants; whereas the foreign trade is a very large, and in many respects a very important one; and thus the system of boards, which would unite master and workman, and bring out of their united powers some natural and independent power to regulate as far as practicable the price of wages, would tend very greatly to fill up that breach in point of sympathy and good feeling which has so long existed, and which has been widening every day within my own experience between the employers and the employed, and to secure the future peace of the community. This system of boards, moreover, would finally and effectually protect the hand-loom weavers against the competition of mechanical power, by fully instructing all the other portions of the public in the peculiarities of the situation of the hand-loom weavers; by making these themselves fully aware of those peculiarities; by showing to them that their situation is such as to place them beyond the reach of any further legislative means of assistance; and by thus inducing them to direct their attention to other objects than the obtainment of such assistance, and particularly, to educate their children for other occupations.

Mr. *Campbell*.—My friend Mr. Orr, late chief magistrate of Paisley, by exerting his influence, not indeed in an official, but in a personal way, effected an arrangement between the manufacturers and weavers. The basis of this arrangement was a table of prices, which the weavers wanted, and which even a number of the manufacturers were disposed to sanction.

As its trade is chiefly for home consumption, and of a description in which there is no power-loom competition, Paisley enjoys greater facilities than any other place for the institution of boards, and in so far as regards that place, could these, though temporary, be brought about by peaceable means, they would be desirable and beneficial.

Mr. *Aitken*.—An Act of the Legislature to prevent the unnecessary reduction of prices would meet with very general approbation; and if a board could be brought to work well without the weavers being a party, it would likely give more satisfaction to the manufacturers than a board composed partly of weavers and partly of manufacturers; but for the sake of unanimity it would be necessary that the weavers should form a part of any board.

Mr. *Stewart*.—I am not aware of any instance of an infringement of our regulations: this is only what might have been anticipated; some men may secretly do a thing which, from a sense of shame, they would not like to do publicly. As the general and the strongly expressed opinion of the public hitherto has been that the weavers for a considerable time have received too little wages, and as all the manufacturers have even subscribed the regulations, it has been likely that no manufacturer has felt disposed to act contrary to what must have been considered as his own express engagement. Whatever may have been any one of the manufacturers' feeling upon the subject of a reduction of wages, no one of those gentlemen has as yet had the hardihood to defy public opinion, to act contrary to it, and to hazard the odium that a discovery of his infringing the regulations would have attached to his character.

Since the introduction of our regulations, every thing connected with the theory of wages has been better understood; a state of things that evidently ought not to continue has been unfolded; though there are some exceptions, the greater part of the manufacturers are feeling persons, and every one of these has done every thing in his power to try to better the condition of the working classes rather than to pull them down; the workmen are satisfied that something in the shape of justice is now done them, a good feeling is restored between them and their employers, and these are now looked upon by the former as no longer their natural oppressors, but, as of old, their natural protectors.

There will be no occasion for different boards for different departments of the trade; any one who understands harness weaving must have a competent knowledge of plain weaving, which is more easily understood than the former. The penalty to be annexed to the violation on the part of a manufacturer of any of the rules of a board, ought not in any case to be a very heavy one; the manufacturing party in a board would be a very competent body to determine the amount of such a penalty, and I think that the manufacturers generally would co-operate in enforcing any penalty of a description so reasonable as that now suggested.

No person ought to give out work without also giving something in the shape of a fair remuneration for the same. Even our manufacturers acknowledge as a first principle of morals, that a workman is entitled to have as much as will sustain him. For example, our minimum rate is supposed to be of such a character; when our tables were agreed to, that minimum was fixed much below the rate of prices actually paid at the time. This country possesses resources and wealth which no other country in the world possesses, and there can be no reason why the persons possessing such enormous wealth should not allow a maintenance at least to the workmen who contribute to every thing connected with their comfort, their luxuries and their ornament, and why, since there are such ample means to prevent it, should those workmen be in the degraded condition in which they now are.

As to the distress among the hand-loom weavers, its very existence has been denied by some, and its extent at least by others; but by boards all the facts connected with the subject will be elicited, and more clearly and distinctly brought forward. This will enable the workmen to determine

PART IV.
REMEDIES FOR THE DISTRESS.

mine whether the distress in question may be removed, or at least palliated, and will dispose them, if they find their condition to be quite hopeless, to send their sons and daughters to other employment than hand-loom weaving.

Mr. *Stalker*.—The Board of Trustees in Scotland for the encouragement of Fisheries and Manufactures, a board that is not yet abolished, at a very early period gave out a rate of wages in the linen trade. In so far as Perth was concerned, and whilst its linen trade continued, this interference of the board maintained a steadiness in reference to wages, and prevented anything between the manufacturers and weavers like that bad feeling which has now so long subsisted between the cotton operatives and their employers; and though wages were low, provisions were comparatively easy; the workmen were comfortable and contented, and the manufacturer had pleasure in having intercourse with those he employed.

There ought to be subordinate boards in different districts, and more than one in every kingdom. Each board should consist of manufacturers and weavers from the different parts of the whole district over which the power of such board should extend. There should be also in every kingdom a general board of appeal. It would be desirable that the referees should not be at the same time manufacturers; it is not even essential that they should have ever been manufacturers at all; it would be enough that they were gentlemen acquainted with the general principles of trade and commerce.

The fixing of a uniform rate of wages in every district should not be imperative on boards; these should have a discretionary power of varying the rate in particular districts. Such a discretionary power would be indispensably necessary to the introduction of any manufacture into a new district, as in such a case the rate of wages in that district would for a time at least require to be below the rate of those districts in which the particular manufacture had been fully established.

Boards, by rendering the trade more steady, would be advantageous to all the parties connected with them; to the operative, to the manufacturer, and to the merchant; though they would be attended with difficulties, particularly at the outset, they might be modified so as to enable them to work; they are asked as an experiment only, and if not found to work well, the hand-loom weavers would be willing to give them up; and were nothing else produced by them, still convincing the sufferers that they were in error regarding them would be a positive advantage.

Conclusion.

As the remedies which have been suggested for the hand-loom weavers' distress are very generally misunderstood, and we even think affectedly misunderstood, we have entered more fully and particularly than we originally intended into the consideration of those remedies. We should now proceed to consider the causes of the distress in question and the distress itself, but this, lest it might prove tiresome to our readers, we shall for the present decline, and the more especially as that distress and its causes have already, in treating of the remedies for the former, been necessarily frequently and extensively adverted to. Should it however be found expedient for the interests of the sufferers, we shall have much pleasure in resuming on some future occasion our benevolent, and we trust useful task.

ANALYSIS

OF THE

EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEES

ON

HAND-LOOM WEAVERS' PETITIONS;

(1834—1835.)

PREPARED FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THIS SESSION.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,*
10 *August* 1835.

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REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

CHANNEL ISLANDS (CORN TRADE);

TOGETHER WITH THE

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

AND AN APPENDIX.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,*
17 *June* 1835.

Martis, 19° die Maii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the present State of the Trade in Corn between the Channel Islands and the United Kingdom; and to Report their Observations thereupon to the House.

And a Committee was appointed of,—

Mr. Poulett Thomson.
The Marquis of Chandos.
Sir Robert Peel.
Mr. Labouchere.
Mr. Cayley.
Lord Charles Russell.
Sir Edward Codrington.
Mr. Gilbert Heathcote.
Lord Viscount Lowther.
Mr. Parrott.
Mr. William Duncombe.
Mr. Handley.
Earl of Darlington.
Mr. Fox Maule.
Mr. Gisborne.
Mr. Evelyn Denison.
Mr. Divett.
Mr. Hutt.
Mr. Alston.
Mr. Robert Clive.
Mr. Barlow Hoy.
Mr. Charles Villiers.
Sir Edward Knatchbull.
Sir James Graham.
Mr. Shaw Lefevre.
Mr. Bramston.
Mr. Ayshford Sanford.
Lord Seymour.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers and Records.

Ordered, THAT Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Mercurii, 20° die Maii, 1835.

Ordered, That Mr. Charles Anderson Pelham be added to the Committee.

Lunæ, 1° die Junii, 1835.

Ordered, That Lord Viscount Grimston be added to the Committee.

Jovis, 4° die Junii, 1835.

Ordered, That Mr. Collier be added to the Committee.

Mercurii, 17° die Junii, 1835.

Ordered,—That the Committee have power to Report the Minutes of Evidence taken before them.

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REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into the present State of the TRADE IN CORN between the *Channel Islands* and the *United Kingdom*, and to report their Observations thereupon; and who were empowered to report the MINUTES of EVIDENCE taken before them;——HAVE investigated the matter to them referred, and agreed to the following REPORT.

YOUR Committee proceeded, in the first place, to consider various Documents upon the subject, which had either been laid before Parliament, or which had been transmitted to them by the Board of Trade or the Deputies from the Islands. These Papers will be found in the Appendix to this Report, and we beg to call the particular attention of The House to them.

The first of these Documents is a Report of the Commissioners of the Customs to the Board of Trade, relative to the alleged illegal Importation of Foreign Corn into this Country from Guernsey and Jersey, dated 29th July 1834; and presented to The House of Commons on the 23d March 1835. It contains the following Statement:—

"With respect to the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey, from the best information which we have been enabled to obtain, it would appear that the annual quantity of Grain grown in Guernsey and Jersey, is as follows; viz.

	Wheat.	Barley.
Guernsey - -	4,595 *qrs.*	- - 3,789 *qrs.*
Jersey - -	10,347 *qrs.*	- - 2,897 *qrs.*

And that the above, as respects Guernsey, is about one-fourth of the quantity consumed in the Island, and as respects Jersey, about one-half.

"That on an average of the last five years, the quantity of Foreign Grain imported, has been,—

	Wheat.	Barley.
Guernsey - -	18,494 *qrs.*	- - 5,967 *qrs.*
Jersey - -	20,795 *qrs.*	- - 3,680 *qrs.*

And the quantity of Grain exported to the United Kingdom, has been,—

	Wheat.	Barley.
Guernsey - -	6,444 *qrs.* - -	226 *qrs.*
Jersey - -	7,358 *qrs.* - -	2,037 *qrs.*"

The Commissioners evidently assume these last quantities to have been entered as Island grown and Duty free, and from these premises they naturally proceed in the same Report to state, as the conclusion which they derive from them, that,

" Thus it would appear that the quantity of Wheat annually exported from Guernsey to the United Kingdom, has exceeded the quantity grown in the Island by upwards of 2,000 quarters; and it is manifest, therefore, that a considerable portion of the Wheat so exported, has consisted of Foreign Wheat; and the only way in which the fraud could have been effected, has been by the exporters making false declarations as to the produce of the Wheat; and although the quantity exported from Jersey has not exceeded the quantity grown in the Island, there is reason to believe that similar frauds have been committed, in that Island, by the same means; but we have not been enabled to ascertain the extent to which such frauds have been carried on, or to discover the guilty parties."

The Statement upon which this reasoning was founded seemed however to be at variance with a Return which had been furnished to the Commissioners of the Customs by Mr. Weston, (a gentleman connected with that Department, who had been sent over to the Islands to examine into the subject,) and which was annexed to their Report, from which it appeared, that the average quantity of Wheat and Barley, imported Duty-free into this Country, as the produce of Guernsey and Jersey, during the last five years, had been,—

	Wheat.	Barley.
Guernsey - -	539 *qrs.* - -	86 *qrs.*
Jersey - -	1,611 *qrs.* - -	1 *qr.*

The Board of Trade accordingly, in a communication to the Commissioners of the Customs, adverted to this discrepancy, as well as to the Statements which had been made by the Deputies from the Islands, who had come to this Country for that purpose.

Your Committee beg to call the attention of The House to the Answer given by the Commissioners of the Customs, which will be found in the Appendix, as well as to the Evidence of Mr. Dean, the Chairman, who was examined by the Committee on this subject. It clearly appears that the Commissioners had inadvertently confounded the Grain imported into this country, avowedly as Foreign Grain from the Islands, with that imported as Island Grain under Certificate and Duty-free; and they seem also to have confounded the Foreign Grain exported from the Islands as such into this Country with the Foreign Grain exported from them to other countries.

Having thus ascertained that the calculations made in the Report from the Customs, in which a charge had been made against the inhabitants of the Channel Islands of an extensive and fraudulent introduction of Foreign Grain into this Country, were erroneous, we proceeded to inquire into various points connected with the

the subject, with a view to discover whether there were any other grounds for supposing that these practices existed, or were likely to be resorted to in future. Your Committee beg to submit to the consideration of The House the Evidence given before them by Mr. Weston, the Officer of the Customs, to whom they have before alluded; of the Deputies from the Islands; of Mr. Frean, a Corn-merchant, connected with Plymouth, which is the Port between which and the Islands by far the greater portion of the Corn Trade is conducted, and of Mr. Wright, the Collector of the Customs, at the same Port.

It appears that the quantity of Wheat imported into the United Kingdom from Guernsey and Jersey, has progressively increased since 1831. The quantities being as follows:—

In 1832 - - - - -	1,939 *qrs.*
1833 - - - - -	5,235 *qrs.*
1834 - - - - -	5,860 *qrs.*

This increase is accounted for by the Deputies from these Islands, from the circumstance of our Ports having been virtually closed since 1831, against Foreign Corn; and when it is considered that the whole quantity of the Wheat grown in both of them amounts to no more than,

Guernsey - - - - -	4,595 *qrs.*
Jersey - - - - -	12,899 *qrs.*
Making a Total of - -	17,494 *qrs.*

(as appears from the Return of Mr. Weston, in the Appendix to the First Report of the Commissioners of the Customs), and that it is not probable that this cultivation will receive much further extension, Your Committee do not anticipate that the Importation to this Country is likely to amount to any quantity worthy of serious attention.

Your Committee recommend, however, that a Return be annually laid upon the Table of The House of Commons, of the quantity of Corn, Meal and Flour, entered Duty-free into the United Kingdom from the Channel Islands; and that in this Return the quantity thus imported be checked with that kept in the Islands of that exported from them to this Country, under Certificate; and likewise a Return of the quantity of Foreign Corn imported into the Islands, and the quantity of Foreign Corn exported from them, distinguishing that sent to this Country, from that exported to other parts of the world.

With regard to the existing system of Certificates of Growth, and of the Documents required to be produced by the Importer of Island Corn into this Country, Your Committee are of opinion, that it should be referred to the consideration of the Commissioners of Customs; and if, upon further investigation, they should conceive that any additional security against fraud would be afforded by any alterations in it, Your Committee entertain no doubt but that the States and other Local Authorities of Guernsey and Jersey, will readily co-operate with them, in taking measures to effect the desired object.

Upon a careful consideration of the whole subject, Your Committee see no reason to believe, that the Privilege possessed by the Channel Islands, of freely importing their produce into this Country, has been made use of to any material extent, as a means of introducing Foreign Corn; and they feel bound to add, that it is strenuously denied by the Deputies from the Islands, that it has been thus abused even in the smallest degree, and that their assertion has not been opposed by any direct proof; and Your Committee are, therefore, of opinion, that it would not be expedient to abrogate or infringe those Privileges which are now enjoyed by the Inhabitants of these Islands, and which were conferred upon them in consideration of the signal service which, at various periods of our history, they have rendered to the Crown and People of this Country.

17 *June* 1835.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

LIST OF WITNESSES.

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Mr. Roper Weston - - - p. 10
Mr. Daniel Brock - - - - p. 13
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Lunæ, 8° die Junii, 1835.

Mr. George Frean - - - p. 19
Mr. John Thomas Wright - - p. 26
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Mercurii, 3° die Junii, 1835.

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY LABOUCHERE, IN THE CHAIR.

Richard Betenson Dean, Esq., called in; and Examined.

Richard B. Dean, Esq.

3 June 1835.

1. YOU are Chairman of the Board of Customs?—I am.

2. Has your attention been lately drawn to the state of the Corn Trade between the Channel Islands and this country?—It has.

3. And to the whole of the communications that passed between you and the Government, which are before the Committee?—Yes, embodied in the Report that is now before you, with the appendixes transmitted with that report, being reports from Mr. Weston, who was delegated by the Board to go to those islands to make inquiry.

4. The Commissioners of Customs seem to allow, do they not, that in the first Report transmitted from them to the Board of Trade there was an error committed with regard to the quantity of corn, grown in the Channel Islands, that was exported from them into this country?—They do, but in their second Report they have endeavoured to correct that. The second Report I allude to is dated the 9th of May.

5. Is the Committtee to understand that the Board of Customs are now of opinion that there is no corn exported from the Channel Islands into this country that is not *bonâ fide* the growth of those islands, except that which is imported into this country avowedly as foreign corn, and which pays duty as such?—Without looking carefully at the Report, I do not know that I could speak from recollection to the precise result the Board of Customs came to. I think the impression conveyed to the Board of Customs from the inquiries that took place seem to be rather, that there was some foreign corn imported from the islands other than that which might be believed to be the produce of the islands, but the extent seemed to be the question.

6. Will you state on what that was founded?—From the returns given in, annexed to the first and second Reports, as to the total quantities grown, and as to the quantities exported.

7. Have the goodness to point out to the Committee in what particular part of your second Report you conceive that fact to be established?—The part of the Report I should advert to would be at the paragraph beginning "With respect to the point upon which your Lordships desire explanation, we have to state, that in the accounts annexed to our Report of the 29th of July last beforementioned, the average annual quantities of wheat and barley exported from the islands of Guernsey and Jersey to the United Kingdom, during the five years ending 5th of January 1834, were stated as follows: viz.

Richard B. Dean, Esq.

3 June 1835.

	WHEAT.			BARLEY.		
	Island Produce.	Foreign Produce.	TOTAL.	Island Produce.	Foreign Produce.	TOTAL.
	Qrs.	*Qrs.*	*Qrs.*	*Qrs.*	*Qrs.*	*Qrs.*
From Guernsey -	539	6,374	6,913	86	1,951	2,037
From Jersey - -	1,611	3,300	4,911	1	226	227
		Total Wheat -	11,824		Total Barley -	2,264

And although these quantities do not exactly correspond with the quantities specified in our said Report, the quantities of Foreign from British not having been distinguished, yet it clearly appears that the total average annual quantity of wheat, including foreign as well as inland produce, exported from Guernsey, amounted to 6,913 quarters," (and the produce, as stated, I think, was not, for a given period, quite so much,) "a quantity which exceeded that which had been actually grown the island by upwards of 2,000 quarters, as stated in our Report."

8. Is the Committee to understand that the excess, which appears from this statement to have taken place, of corn imported into this country over corn grown in the islands, that that import of corn, *bonâ fide* from those islands, was avowedly as foreign corn?—Certainly not as avowedly foreign corn, inasmuch as almost the whole has come in under certificate; and if it did, it came in as the growth of the island. This is my reply to the question, as to the ground upon which I was under the impression that some foreign corn had been introduced into this country from upon those islands.

9. That is adhering, very nearly, to the original statement in the original Report?—Yes, it is.

10. How do you reconcile the statement that you have made with the admission which the Board of Customs seems to make at the same time, that the quantity of quarters imported from Guernsey has been only 539, and the quarters imported from Jersey only 1,611, speaking of corn which has been really the produce of those islands?—I would take the liberty, in answer to that question, to refer the Committee to that part of the Report which says, " with reference, however, to the total quantity of wheat imported into the United Kingdom, as shown in the account herewith transmitted, marked (A.), (which information was not before us at the time we made our former Report,) and assuming that the quantity imported, as of island produce, was *bonâ fide* the produce of Guernsey and Jersey, it would appear that foreign wheat has not been improperly introduced into the country to any great extent." It is to be observed, that in the accounts transmitted to us of the quantities of corn exported from Guernsey and Jersey, the officers did not distinguish the places to which the *foreign* corn had been exported, and we had, therefore, inadvertently assumed, that the whole quantity had been exported to the United Kingdom, whereas it now appears that a great portion thereof had been exported to places other than to the United Kingdom; the average annual quantity exported to the United Kingdom having only been as follows; viz.

	Foreign Wheat.	Foreign Barley.
From Guernsey - -	4,951 qrs.	146 qrs.
— Jersey - -	2,208 —	100 —
	7,159 qrs.	246 qrs.

So that, in point of fact, at one time we talked of export generally, and assumed that that was to the United Kingdom, and afterwards we found that the export, though it was nearly the same, yet, when it came to be examined, included a portion that came to the United Kingdom, and another portion that went to other places.

11. Does not the admission you have made invalidate the previous statement, that there was reason to suppose that no less than 2,318 quarters of the wheat imported into this country from the Channel Islands, and represented to be the growth of

of those islands, were truly the growth of foreign countries?—The accounts presented show the quantity grown in the island and the quantity exported, and the returns exhibit that a given quantity was exported beyond that which was grown; the result was that such quantity came here. On further inquiry it was discovered, that the total amount, although exported, did not come here, but went elsewhere; and the result seems to be, that the quantities of island growth and of import into and export from the islands are correct; but the error seems to be, in having assumed that the total quantity exported had come to this country.

12. Are the Committee then to understand, that the supposition that 2,318 quarters were exported into this country from the islands, as the produce of these islands, beyond what has been really grown there, was founded on the erroneous supposition that the whole of this came to this country, and that a part of it did not go to foreign countries?—I can come to no better result; the question is a matter of fact, and must wholly depend upon the accuracy of the accounts.

13. Have the kindness, reverting to a former question that was put to you, to state to the Committee on what grounds it is that you entertain an impression that some foreign corn is still imported into this country as the produce of the Channel Islands?—By reference to the other part of the Report I think it will be found, upon an average for the last three years, that the quantity imported has gradually increased, and that it has come in under certificates, a very small quantity having been imported as foreign; and if the impression which I first entertained be correct, (and I do not wish to press it beyond that which is justifiable,) the inference would be, that some foreign corn has been introduced under certificate as of island produce; such at least is my impression, that a portion of the corn that has been imported under certificate is not *bonâ fide* the produce of the islands.

14. The impression then that you entertain, that a certain quantity of foreign corn is probably introduced into this country as island-grown corn, mainly rests on the circumstance of the import of that country having so much increased of late years?—I think that is the only answer I can give to that question. I have no facts, nor have I had an opportunity of following it up with that degree of proof which would amount to legal proof. If my impression be erroneous I am sorry for it.

15. Would you state in what proportion it has increased?—It is down in the Report.

16. Do you think it possible that such a system of sending in this Jersey grown corn, under false certificates, could take place?—I should say it is possible: I would take the liberty of asking what is there to prevent it. The certificate is taken by the officer; he cannot go on the spot to see the actual wheat, and follow it from the field to the barn, from the barn to the custom-house, and from the custom-house to the ship. I am speaking of the possibility. The certificate is granted on the *ipse dixit* of the party, and if part of the corn for which a certificate has been granted be of foreign produce, how is anybody to detect it?

17. Your conclusion is, that that very great stress laid down by some parties, that this certificate is a very safe one, is very inconclusive?—Yes.

18. Are you acquainted with the formalities?—I believe I am. It is a certificate granted by the collector, founded on proof made before the local authorities; but Mr. Weston, who is here, will explain it more correctly, for he was on the spot, and has seen the manner in which the certificates have been granted, and it is upon the production of the certificate to the officers here that the wheat is admitted to be free.

19. You have no knowledge of any corn, or of any quantity of corn imported from either of the islands into this country, except into the port of London?—We have accounts kept at every port throughout the kingdom; and Mr. Irving, who has the preparation of these accounts, should further information be desired, could attend and give most correct information.

20. You think that a mistake may have arisen as to these 2,000 quarters of surplus quantity, in consequence of its not having all come to this country, but a part of it having been exported to foreign countries; is there any means of ascertaining how much has gone to foreign countries; and how much has come to this country?—In some part of the Report there is a statement made to supply a former inadvertence, explaining what was the actual quantity that has been imported into this country, and the total quantity exported.

21. Therefore unless it can be proved that a considerable quantity of that 2,000 quarters has gone to foreign countries, the Board of Customs is not considered in error, but the statement they first made remains in full force?—I apprehend so; I do not mean to take great credit for accuracy; but my impression is, that the

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actual quantity first taken as exported was 2,000 quarters; at first it was assumed that this quantity had been exported to Great Britain, but this was subsequently corrected by stating the total quantity exported, and what quantity had been exported to this country, and how much to other places.

22. Then there is no means of ascertaining what quantity comes to Great Britain, and what quantity went elsewhere?—I apprehend there is; but I should mislead if I spoke decidedly; I could get the account with perfect accuracy.

23. There is no objection, is there, against the islands exporting all they grow?—None whatever; there is no law to stop their exporting what they please, whether Foreign or British; there is a perfect freedom to export.

24. There is no evidence that they exported all they grew before the last three years; they did not export to this country all they grew?—They did not; but I am only speaking from hearsay; I have not the account in my own head to answer it.

Mr. *Roper Weston*, called in; and Examined.

Mr. *Roper Weston.*

25. WHAT situation do you hold connected with the Custom-house?—I am Collector of the Customs at the port of Weymouth.

26. How long have you been attached to it?—Since 1812.

27. You were sent by the Board of Customs to the Channel Islands during the last year, in order to investigate the state of the Corn Trade between those Islands and this country?—I was.

28. Will you state to the Committee generally, whether it is your impression, from the information you obtained in those islands, that there is any corn introduced from them into this country, as the growth of those islands, which is, in point of fact, foreign corn?—From the nature and character of the reports I heard on my arrival there, I am of opinion that some has been introduced both by substitution and admixture, but I am inclined to think not much; however I could bring no facts home as to its having actually taken place.

29. All corn imported from the Channel Islands to this country that does not pay duty as foreign corn, must be accompanied by a certificate of growth?—Yes, to be admitted duty free.

30. Do you think the system of certificates in use with respect to the Corn Trade does afford sufficient security to the public?—I think not; for any party, by swearing the corn intended to be exported from the island to be of its growth, might, I conceive, without much difficulty, introduce it into Great Britain as such; the official documents however would prevent fraud, if the shippers were not regardless of the obligation of an oath.

31. You think it is as perfect as could be devised?—My opinion is, by making the shipper as well as the grower take the required oath, some additional security might be obtained.

32. Do you consider the system of certificates as affording an adequate protection against fraud?—No; for if the parties be regardless of an oath, the certificate is of no protection.

33. Have you any reason to believe that in point of fact there are any false certificates given?—If any foreign corn has been imported into this country, as of the growth of the islands, which I have reason to think, from the reports I have before alluded to, has taken place, it must have been under certificates falsely obtained or misapplied.

34. If those documents are correct, it is impossible that any foreign corn should be imported into this country as island produce?—If those documents are correct, that is, if the corn alluded to therein be shipped, it is impossible that any foreign corn can be imported into this country as of the produce of the islands: persons may professedly ship the island production, but in reality foreign corn in lieu.

35. Would not that be falsifying the certificate; would not such substitution be in point of fact a complete falsification of the certificate?—Certainly.

36. And there would be perjury committed?—Yes, nothing short of it; and except by perjury the importation of foreign wheat to this country as the produce of the islands could not be effected.

37. You believe the present system of certificates is as perfect as Government or the Custom-house can make it; but you do not mean to say it is a perfect protection?—I do not; the documents are nearly as perfect as they can be made, and without perjury no fraud can be effected.

38. You do not mean to say it is a complete perfect protection?—I do not.

39. Have you seen the Second Report of the Board of Trade?—No.

40. Could

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40. Could you suggest any other mode by which you conceive this importation of foreign corn, in the place of island produce, could be adopted?—No other than what I have stated in the former part of my evidence, of requiring the oath of the exporter as well as of the grower.

41. Have you any reason to believe, on the part of the local authorities in the Channel Islands, there is any disposition to protect persons in a fraudulent trade between those islands and this country?—One or more of the local authorities were stated to be in the corn trade, and although it might have been considered by some that they were deeply interested, still I could not learn that they had lent themselves to any fraudulent proceeding.

42. Was there any appearance of favour in the authorities?—Not that I am aware of.

43. Is there any laxity of duty at Jersey?—The local authorities were not so particular at Jersey as at Guernsey; a mere declaration was required at the former, whilst the oath of the grower was insisted upon at the latter: the law, however, only requires a declaration.

44. Do you believe it possible that, independent of the corn which is introduced either accompanied by certificates, or avowedly as foreign corn, from the Channel Islands to this country, any foreign corn whatever is introduced from the Channel Islands to this country?—It is possible; but I have no reason to think it has been done.

45. Do you think it impossible, from the nature of the customs?—Foreign corn may be imported in the legal way.

46. Do you think it possible, from the nature of the trade, and under the existing regulations, that any corn at all can come from those islands to this country in the way of a smuggled article?—I should say conclusively not; still it might be possible, but I do not think it has or is likely to occur.

47. Supposing it were possible that such introduction of foreign corn into this country could take place, would it not be more to the advantage of the smuggler to introduce it from a foreign port direct than taking it round?—Yes, for he would encounter more difficulty; and the chances are, that he would be more readily detected in any attempt to smuggle from the Channel Islands.

48. Under the privilege of those islands, it is your opinion that no fraud is committed?—Not to any extent in regard to corn, the island produce.

49. Of foreign wheat being sent through those islands under their privilege to this country?—Unless under a falsified document, or by substitution, as previously stated.

50. It appears, from papers before the Committee, that a great increase has taken place in the importation of island-grown wheat from the Channel Islands into this country within the last three years; are you aware of that?—I am.

51. We find, in a statement that has been laid before the Committee from the Board of Customs, there is the following paragraph: "We have further to observe, that all the wheat and barley imported into the United Kingdom from Jersey and Guernsey since 1831 has been entered duty-free, the same having been accompanied by certificates in proof of the same being the produce of those islands respectively, and that the quantity of wheat so imported has progressively increased as follows: In 1832, 1,939 quarters; in 1833, 5,235 quarters; and in 1834, 5,860 quarters:" can you state to the Committee what in your opinion has been the cause of this great increase?—It might have arisen from several causes. I think in the early part of the period you are speaking of, foreign corn was being imported into this country upon payment of a small duty, and it then might have paid the importer for importing foreign corn from Guernsey; as soon as the duty became heavy, the importation of foreign wheat from Guernsey and Jersey ceased, and corn, the production of the islands, then became a better speculation; and this led, in a great measure, to the increase of the importation of the island produce.

52. When did the Guernsey corn first commence to be imported into this country; was there any imported in 1812; when was any first imported to Weymouth?—I think soon after the peace; I cannot tell whether any was imported in 1812, but I should imagine not, as corn was exported to the Channel Islands during the war, as they did not grow sufficient for their consumption.

53. It does not grow its consumption now?—It appears not by the returns furnished me by the local authorities.

54. Is there any Guernsey corn imported at this time into Weymouth?—There was a small quantity imported a short time since, a very short time since.

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55. You stated in 1829 what the importation was then; do you know what it was in 1820, or whether there was any or not?—No, I cannot say.

56. Do you happen to know whether corn imported from the islands is much used as seed corn?—I do not think it is.

57. Up to what period was corn exported to Guernsey?—I think till the conclusion of the war, and for a short time after.

58. And from that period have small quantities of corn come into the port of Weymouth?—Yes.

59. Is not Plymouth a great place for it?—The importations have been large at Plymouth, at least I have been so informed.

60. Is that under your jurisdiction?—No.

61. You are not visiting-officer there?—No.

62. You know nothing of Plymouth?—No.

63. A great deal of corn and flour is cleared out from the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey, not for this country, but for other ports; have you reason to suppose that any so cleared out is brought into the ports of this kingdom under false certificates?—I have no reason to suppose so; I should think not.

64. How do you account for the great increase in the last two years?—It is scarcely possible to account for it satisfactorily, but the increase between 1830 and 1834 I can only account for as I have previously stated, viz. that in some parts of those years foreign corn was admitted on a small duty.

65. Have you visited the island more than once officially?—Yes, more than once, but not on this subject.

66. When did you visit to make this report?—Last June.

67. Can you suggest to the Committee generally any regulations which, in your opinion, would be desirable with reference to the Corn Trade between the Channel Islands and this country, which, preserving the principle of admitting what was the *bonâ fide* produce of the islands of this country, would yet protect the agriculture of this country against any chance of foreign corn being introduced under colour of this privilege?—No other way than by warehousing their grain as soon as produced, but this would create an insurmountable difficulty, inasmuch as it must then be kept under the King's lock, as bonded wheat in this country, till exported from or consumed in the island.

68. Do you consider such an arrangement would be considered very irksome and inconvenient in the islands?—I think it would be attended with the most serious inconvenience from the smallness of the farms, and the number of persons interested.

69. The corn, generally speaking, in the Island of Jersey, is not warehoused previously to exportation?—No.

70. It is usual in the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey to pay rents in produce and kind, is it not?—Yes, I have understood it is.

71. Did you hear any facts as to why such payments in kind had been made in foreign corn?—Not facts.

72. You have heard rumours, but could ascertain no facts?—I have certainly heard it rumoured, but was unable to ascertain facts.

73. Is it not perfectly easy to distinguish the Guernsey and Jersey wheat from foreign wheat?—I have understood so.

74. You never heard of frauds of that kind, of foreign wheat being introduced as Guernsey or Jersey, and detected by the difference in the grain?—It has not come within my knowledge.

75. Supposing the average quantity of corn grown in those islands to be tolerably ascertained, do you not think any statement put on the face of the certificate, as to the quantity that had then been exported, would be a security that there never could be beyond that quantity imported into Great Britain without the officers of the customs knowing it on the face of the certificate. The last amount being 3,000 quarters, the extent of sale would be 3,200?—If the quantity of corn imported into this country was equal to the quantity produced in the islands, such a proceeding would prevent the exportation of any quantity beyond the produce of those islands. Wheat is usually imported into Weymouth from the Channel Islands in small quantities, and I have no recollection of its having exceeded, in any one instance, 200 quarters.

76. In one vessel?—Yes; and that has created an alarm amongst the agriculturists when published in the newspapers.

77. Still, as all those vessels clear out from two ports, those certificates come from

from the same place, there would be no difficulty in stating the quantity that had left: the last, for example, being 3,000, the next being short of 3,200?—No. Mr. *Roper Weston.* 3 June 1834.

78. So that the certificates on the face of them would show whether more than the growth of the island had been imported into this country or exported?—Yes, they would.

Mr. *Daniel Brock*, called in; and Examined.

79. YOU are the Bailiff of the Island of Guernsey, are you not?—I am. Mr. *Daniel Brock.*

80. How long have you filled that situation?—Since 1821; 14 years; I have been a member of the court nearly 40.

81. You have seen the Second Report of the Board of Customs on the subject of the corn trade between the Channel Islands and this country?—I have.

82. Have you any observations to offer to the Committee on that report?—I have one very material one, which was produced by Mr. Dean's answers.

83. You were in the room when the chairman of the Board of Customs was examined?—Yes.

84. Have you any observations to make to the Committee in consequence of that evidence, and that report?—When Mr. Dean was asked whether the quantity of corn exported from Guernsey exceeded the growth there, he said the impression in his mind was that it had, because the quantity exported from Guernsey was 6,000 and odd quarters, and the quantity grown was only 4,500. Now Mr. Dean lost sight of his own report; if the Committee will be so good as to see in page eight, 6,913 quarters made up in this way; from Guernsey 539 quarters of their produce, foreign corn 6,374. Thus the quantity of 6,913 is made up, by their own report, of 539 only of Guernsey wheat and 6,374 of foreign wheat. Therefore that exceeds, to be sure, the 4,595 quarters we grow, but by their own accountant there is only 539 of Guernsey growth out of the 4,595 grown. How can any impression or belief of fraud take place when the quantity of exportation bears so small a proportion to the growth? If there was any profit in exporting foreign grain as Guernsey it would be carried to some extent; but what would be the possible use of numbers of persons going to swear for 539 quarters when they could have sworn to 4,595; to the whole we grow? Instead of that, the impression which is really conveyed by Mr. Dean's deposition is, that we have exported more than we grew. He still comes back to the same charge which was done away with in the first report. In point of fact, the island of Guernsey, in the five years ending in January 1834, only exported 539 quarters out of the 4,595 grown.

85. What is the annual growth in Guernsey?—All the islands together, say Guernsey, Sark, and other smaller islands, making part of the bailiwick of Guernsey, produce on the average only 4,595 quarters.

86. The total annual growth?—Yes; that report was never found fault with; it is a report signed by myself; I had some trouble in making it from the account of tithes received. I wish to impress on the Committee all the facts about our exporting more than we grew, for Mr. Dean seemed really to support that charge.

87. It has been represented to the Committee that the quantity of corn imported into this country as island produce has greatly increased since the year 1832; will you state to the Committee what, in your opinion, has been the cause of that increase?—That is of very easy solution. First of all, when the prices are high in England, the duty is very low, then there is no advantage in sending it from Guernsey, no duty of any consequence is saved; but when the duty is high, and we pay no duty, there is more difference in our favour between the foreign corn and ours than when the duty is very low, and that is the case now. The price of corn being very low in England, the duty is proportionably high, the duty on foreign corn exceeding at this moment the price of the very best wheat; therefore the difference between the advantage to us is greater at such a moment (since we pay no duty) than if foreign corn paid little or no duty. Foreign corn paying so very high a duty the advantage is greater to us than it would be otherwise. Another reason for the last two years is, that this very measure of a Bill to restrict our importation being on the tapis, being generally mentioned and reported, everybody who dealt in corn made it a point to go from farm to farm, saying, "This is the only opportunity you have of sending your corn to England, therefore you had better sell it." It is like a run on a bank for gold or for payment; if there is an alarm of the payments being put a stop to, that run will increase. Hucksters go from house to house, and

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say, "If you have two or three quarters of corn, sell it all, for there will be a stop put to the importation in England; now is your only time." One great inducement we have to export is the difference in the currency, which perhaps gentlemen are not aware of. There is a difference of 5 or 6 per cent. between our currency and the English, in consequence of which if a farmer can be paid in English money, and realize in that money the Guernsey price, that is a sufficient inducement to him to send to England. There the currency works in a way gentlemen are not exactly aware of. The French money is our current money.

88. How many francs will go to a sovereign?—From 25 to 26, according to the exchange of Paris and London.

89. Nearer 26 than 25?—It varies.

90. What is the circulation of Guernsey?—French money.

91. And paper: you have paper?—We have 1 *l.* notes.

92. Has the cultivation of wheat been extending itself in the island of Guernsey?—Quite otherwise; it has been diminishing every year.

93. Is this privilege of importing wheat from Guernsey into this country one to which great value is attached in that island?—Yes; the value attached to it is in being connected with other produce. The present growth of corn is so trifling in Guernsey the article of corn might not be of very particular importance to the island at this very time, but times may change, and being part of the privileges we have, if that was not respected we should naturally apprehend that similar inroads would be made upon every other article. Cows, fruit and potatoes are the chief exportation from Guernsey. Jersey being the larger island they have a greater interest in keeping up the privileges as to corn than Guernsey may now have; any change would affect the landed interest there very considerably indeed. In Guernsey the farms are small, and uncommonly divided; there are only a few estates of 50 or 60 English acres; we have no estate in Guernsey of more than 70 English acres.

94. You mean a farm?—We have no farms; they are all estates, the occupiers being all proprietors.

95. What is the real produce of Guernsey alone in wheat?—Four thousand five hundred and ninety-five quarters.

96. Is that on an average?—It is in the first Report correctly stated as the average of the five years ending 5th January 1834.

97. It has been stated to the Committee by the deputies of the islands, that the chief purpose for which corn was imported into this country from those islands was as seed-corn; have you any personal knowledge of that fact?—No, I have not. And if the Committee will be pleased to observe that by the returns the quantity is so small (539 quarters, the growth of 20 acres,) that really there cannot be much sent for seed, or any other purpose; there is not enough to make pap for the children in Weymouth or Plymouth; but Mr. Le Couteur, who is a very good agriculturist, will be able to account for the matter of seed-corn from Jersey.

98. Do you speak of 539 quarters as the average for five years?—Yes, I do.

99. Do you know what is the average of the five years preceding?—I should suppose it less.

100. Do you know at what period you began to export corn to England?—Our privilege to do so has existed since our connexion with England, but I am not aware that it has ever extended to anything like our growth.

101. Would there be any indisposition on the part of the islands to adopt any suggestions that might be made in order to introduce regulations into the corn trade which, while they left entirely free the admission of the produce of the islands into these kingdoms, yet might effectually guard against the possibility of foreign corn being introduced by means of that privilege?—If the Committee were to know the pains taken by the authorities, they would join with us in thinking that no new restrictions are absolutely necessary. Not only the grower is known, and must come to a magistrate of the court to swear to his certificate for even one or two quarters he has sold, as being the growth of his own estate, but the governor himself must countersign it. Any man who comes to make an oath of that kind being instantly known, it is impossible for him to take a false oath without being detected. After the governor, the custom-house officer must sign it likewise; in addition to the grower, the shipper must go through the same formalities. No corn can be entered in England duty-free but under the Custom-house reports and returns; therefore, supposing the 539 quarters which

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we have exported on the average of five years were foreign corn, that is the whole extent of the mischief, admitting, what we positively deny, that any part of it were foreign at all.

102. Would there be any objection on the part of the islands to a limitation in point of quantity of the exports from those islands, taking care that that quantity should be considerable enough to admit, but not to prevent the free importation of any corn grown in those countries?—We would strongly object to any diminution of our privileges. This is one which we have given no cause to abridge, which we have never abused. Mr. Weston says, "I have heard of fraud, but I have never heard one fact by which it could be substantiated." Mr. Dean says, that no considerable quantity is fraudulently introduced, but he has no grounds for a single grain. What is his ground? He only says that his belief is that, because the quantity has increased within the last two years, there must be something of that kind.

103. Are you aware of the number of persons engaged in the transporting of grain from the island of Guernsey to Great Britain?—I do not believe there are more than five or six.

104. Is there any considerable trade in Guernsey of foreign corn?—Yes, very considerable.

105. Where do you generally trade with it?—It is sent to England when the duty is not too high, to foreign parts when in want of it, and to the colonies. Our merchants, and Jersey in particular, employ upwards of 4,000 persons in the fisheries, and establishments connected with them, where foreign grain is admitted.

106. You consider this trade of corn to England as of trifling importance, but adhere so strongly to it only in reference to your other privileges?—Yes; and on account of the encouragement it gives to our agriculturists for the growth of corn. If that was to be taken away its cultivation would be diminished, if not cease altogether.

107. You stated, in the beginning of your evidence, that a great quantity of that corn which is stated in page 8 as coming here as native corn, as corn grown on the islands, is in fact foreign corn?—It is admitted by the return itself, that of the 6,913 quarters exported from Guernsey, 6,374 were foreign.

108. The consumption of Guernsey exceeds its own growth?—Considerably.

109. Therefore it is clear when you export, means to export your own, and consume foreign?—Of course.

110. Did you say the cultivation of wheat was increasing?—No; diminishing very much.

111. Can you give the Committee any account of the quantity of foreign corn imported into the island of Guernsey, and what becomes of it?—I can give you an account of every quarter imported, and what has been done with it.

112. For one year, or for a series of years?—For five or six years; from 1830 to 1835. Imported in 1830, 34,509 quarters; 1831, 17,707 quarters; 1832, 10,525 quarters; 1833, 16,456 quarters; and 1834, 13,271 quarters. The total is 92,468: the average is 18,493.

113. And has been considerably less, or one-half less imported the last three years than at first?—Yes.

114. How has that corn been disposed of?—18,493 quarters are importation; 4,500 are the average growth; together, 22,993 quarters: we have, by the last census, 26,128 souls in our bailiwick; therefore, putting one quarter to each person a year, you have pretty nearly the expenditure of the whole corn.

115. The inhabitants of Guernsey do not, according to your opinion, consume the same quantity of corn on an average that the same number of persons in England do?—No, probably not; for barley is used a good deal as a mixture with wheat in making their bread.

116. Could you give the export of the foreign corn?—The export of the foreign corn from Guernsey to Great Britain in the year 1830 was 8,958, that is, paid the duty; 1831, 10,066 quarters. If the gentlemen of the customs had taken the pains of simplifying the thing, by saying so much has been exported from the islands and has paid the duty, and so much has not paid the duty, they would have made it as clear as could be afterwards: 1832, it was 5,072 quarters; 1833, 663; 1834, none; 1835, none.

117. Now will you have the goodness to state the average?—The average of the six years is 4,126 quarters.

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118. Have you got the return of the island produce entered into Great Britain under certificate?—Yes; that is correctly stated in the reports themselves, but I have it here. "Guernsey corn exported to England: 1830, in round numbers, 255 imperial quarters; 1831, 777; 1832, 184; 1833, 31; 1834, 1,448; 1835, 1387;" that makes six years; now the average of the six years is 680. I suppose any gentleman who has 25 acres of land can easily grow that quantity.

119. In the quarters you have been speaking of, you mean English?—Imperial measure.

Thomas Le Breton, Esq., called in; and Examined.

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120. WHAT situation do you hold in the Island of Jersey?—I am Attorney-general.

121. How long have you filled that situation?—Since December 1823.

122. You are one of the deputies sent to this country on the subject of the Corn Trade between this country and the Channel Islands?—Yes.

123. Has your attention been drawn to the Second Report of the Commissioners of Customs to the Board of Trade on this subject; and have you heard the evidence of Mr. Dean and Mr. Weston?—I have.

124. Have you any observations to make to the Committee with reference to that evidence and that Report?—The First Report, which was printed by and laid before the House of Commons, dated the 29th of July 1834, imputed a very considerable fraud to the island of Guernsey by representing the exportation of corn from that island as exceeding its produce by upwards of 2,000 quarters. Mr. Brock has sufficiently refuted that part of the statement; but this Report went on to say, after speaking of Guernsey, "And although the quantity exported from Jersey has not exceeded the quantity grown in the island, there is reason to believe that similar frauds have been committed in that island by the same means; but we have not been able to ascertain the extent to which such frauds have been carried on, or to discover the guilty parties." First, they say that similar frauds have been committed by the same means. It is evident they could not be by the same means, since it is admitted that Jersey grew more than it exported, and that the fraud committed in Jersey was by exporting more than its growth, when they state by the same means: I do not know what meaning they could attach to that expression, "we have not been enabled to ascertain the extent to which such frauds have been carried on, or to discover the guilty parties." It evidently appears, from what I have heard from Mr. Dean to-day, that no evidence of any kind could be collected; that on the contrary, from all the reports and returns of the Custom-house, it is evident no fraud had been committed; but still Mr. Dean persisted in saying that there was an *impression* that fraud did exist. This Report, of course, caused great alarm and excitement in the islands; in the first place, as it was likely to deprive them of a privilege on which they set the greatest value; and in the next, as representing them as a set of smugglers, imputing fraud where it did not exist; and they were naturally anxious to rescue their characters from this imputation. In consequence of this, some observations were addressed to the Board of Trade by Mr. Brock, Colonel Le Couteur and myself, pointing out the inaccuracy of the Report, and the false reasoning and conclusions which had been deduced by the Commissioners from it; but Mr. Weston, who has also been heard before the Committee, says, that if the Commissioners had followed the materials furnished them, they would not have fallen into these errors in framing their Report. Mr. Weston's declarations do not correspond with the Report of the Commissioners. I confine my observations to the island of Jersey. Mr. Weston, in his Report, or in one part of his letter (p. 8.) says, "and in reference to the regulations under which such corn is admitted into this country free of duty, I beg to observe, on the issuing of a cocket by the officer of customs for its exportation, proof is adduced before the local authorities of its being of the island produce, which proof is taken to the governor with the cocket, and his certificate obtained that proof has been made in the manner required by the law, when, on the whole of the documents being deposited with the officers of the customs, the vessel is cleared, and the cocket, governor's certificate, with their own certificate of clearance, and a manifest of the cargo, are delivered to the master, as the official documents to show the legality of the transaction, which is corroborated by the master's declaration, with that of the importer, on its being admitted to entry in this country; and I am not aware of any official or other regulations which can be enacted as a greater security beyond those I have already alluded to as being the practice of the

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the Royal Court of Guernsey, *and now the law at Jersey*, in requiring the oath of the grower, in each case, of the actual quantity sold." Mr. Weston seemed to suppose that the same precautions were not taken at Jersey as at Guernsey; the fact is, he labours under an error in that respect; the custom followed in Guernsey has been enacted as a law in Jersey, imposing the strongest penalties. This enactment is now on the table of this Committee. A person convicted of passing a false certificate to export foreign corn is liable to six months imprisonment and hard labour, independently of a fine of 2*l.* 10*s.* for every quarter, and 1*l.* 5*s.* for every hundred weight of flour so exported; so that we cannot possibly impose heavier penalties, or punish more severely infractions of this kind. The estates are of so trifling an extent in Jersey as well as in Guernsey that every property is known. The grower must swear that the corn is the produce of his land; the person who buys it must swear that he has purchased it from the grower, whose certificate accompanies the affidavit of the buyer, which is produced to the governor, *who must also sign the certificate*; and these documents finally appear at the Custom-house, where they may undergo investigation. There is this advantage in a small country like Jersey, which could not exist in a country like England, that the baillie, with the magistrates of the court, 12 in number, are the only persons who can administer an oath: they are so well acquainted with the different people who come before them, that if a man came to pass a certificate for 10 quarters of corn, who had not grown that quantity, the magistrates would say, "that is impossible, you have not grown that quantity; I know your land, I know what you can grow." Generally speaking, they pass their certificates before the magistrates or jurats who reside in their own neighbourhood, who know them and their families, and every inch of ground they cultivate as well as they do themselves. It is next to impossible that any fraud could be committed, especially when the very small quantity sold and exported is taken into consideration; for, as Mr. Weston has observed, such a thing as a cargo of corn from Jersey or Guernsey has never been known; the amount of one exportation being generally from 20 to 50 quarters.

125. How many quarters of corn is there in one cargo?—Never exceeding 100, very often as low as 10; suiting the convenience of the small dealers who bring it over to Plymouth. In the second report, in page 9, there appears not to be quite so fair an admission as I think, after the error had been pointed out, the islands had reason to expect from those gentlemen. They say, "With reference, however, to the total quantity of wheat imported into the United Kingdom, as shown in the account herewith transmitted, marked (A.) (which information was not before us at the time we made our former report), and assuming that the quantity imported as of island produce was *bonâ fide* the produce of Guernsey and Jersey, it would appear that foreign wheat has not been improperly introduced into this country to any great extent." I think they should have fairly said, "has not been introduced at all." There is nothing in any of the returns or reports that can warrant these gentlemen in saying, or presuming to suspect, that any corn has been fraudulently imported. They go on to say, "It is to be observed, that in the accounts transmitted to us of the quantities of corn exported from Guernsey and Jersey, the officers did not distinguish the places to which the foreign corn had been exported, and we had therefore inadvertently assumed that the whole quantity had been exported to the United Kingdom, whereas it now appears that a great portion thereof had been exported to places other than the United Kingdom." From the returns which we have procured from the Custom-house in Jersey, I do not find them agree even with the amended report. It would appear as if it was stated here, under the head of annual average for five years, ending the 5th of January 1834, at page 9, "Quantity of foreign produce imported from Guernsey 6,374 quarters, ditto from Jersey 3,300." Now I cannot make out whence they have taken that amount, because from the statement that I have laid on the table this morning (taken by Colonel Le Couteur himself from the Custom-house books,) it would appear, we have not, since 1830, sent any foreign corn whatever to England. That in itself is of no consequence, because, if it was brought to England as foreign corn, it was of course charged with the duty. I mention this merely to show that there must have been some misunderstanding and errors in the whole of these returns, which unfortunately have always been against the islands, and none of them in their favour, so that from the reading and circulation of these reports very unfounded impressions, unfavourable to our privileges and to our character, have gone abroad, which it takes time to remove and show the true state of the case. We export a great quantity of the foreign corn which

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is brought into the islands to our fisheries in Newfoundland and the coasts of Labrador and New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Canada. There are, I suppose, nearly 1,200 Jersey seamen employed in that trade, in addition to about 2,000 natives, and near 8,000 tons of shipping from Jersey alone. Provisions for the whole fishing season are generally taken out, as biscuit or flour; this disposes of a large quantity of corn which is introduced into Jersey: and I am confident, from the official situation I hold as public prosecutor in Jersey, and called on to prosecute all infringements of any law or regulation, I have never had an opportunity of detecting a fraud of this nature; and I can assure the Committee, that the greatest pains have been taken by the states of the island, by my colleague the solicitor-general and myself, to watch over the exportation of corn. Various reports have been circulated at times, by interested persons, or by persons who were jealous of the privileges enjoyed by the island; but during the last 10 years we have never been able to detect a single case of fraud, so as to be able to bring it home to any one individual. I am convinced the whole population attaches such a value to that privilege, that there is no restrictive measure which they would not submit to, to detect fraud and to punish the offenders. There is no wish whatever in the authorities, or in any one inhabitant, from the highest to the lowest, to afford the least protection to fraud.

126. If corn is exported from Jersey, is it sent to Canada in the shape of bread?—Generally as biscuit and flour; there are several large mills in the island that grind it.

127. What is the size of the estates in Jersey?—I should say the average of the island would be about 15 acres.

128. Is that English measure?—Yes.

129. Is not Rozel the largest; about 100 English acres?—It is one of the largest. Trinity contains about 400 *vergées*, or 180 acres; it has been increased. Samarés contains about 600. There may be two or three estates that exceed 150 acres, but the average is about 15 acres throughout the whole island.

130. Is it not possible for the farmers in the island of Jersey to export a certain quantity of wheat nominally as their own, certified as their own, and mixing a certain proportion of foreign grain with it to avoid detection?—I think not. In the first place, they must perjure themselves; and generally the foreign grain is of such a different quality and appearance from Jersey grain, that when mixed together even persons who are not acquainted with the corn trade would easily detect it.—[*Two or three specimens of the Jersey grain were here exhibited to the Committee.*]

131. What, in your opinion, is the cause of the increase of the quantity of grain imported into this country from 1833 and 1834, or from 1832; there is a very considerable increase in those years, as you are aware?—I do not know that I could state it in a clearer manner than Mr. Brock has done; I attribute it entirely to the causes enumerated by Mr. Brock.

132. When was the first impression in the islands that a Bill was in preparation to interfere with the privileges of that island as to the export of grain?—The first alarm, I believe, was some time before the arrival of Mr. Weston in the island, in June 1834, who was sent over to make inquiries.

133. How could that affect the increase in the year 1833, for the increase appears to have been in 1833?—In 1833 the quantity is 5,235, and in 1834 it is about 600 quarters more.

134. From 1832 to 1833 it is still more?—I refer to the causes which have been set forth by Mr. Brock; the moment the price of corn lowers in England the duty increases, therefore no foreign corn can be brought into England, but the islanders seize that opportunity of introducing corn of their own growth. I agree perfectly with the opinion expressed by Mr. Brock.

135. Have you any reason to suppose that there is any connivance by any of the custom officers, or otherwise, in the island, at the exportation of foreign corn, as of home growth?—I do not think it possible; there is not a single person employed in the customs that could even be suspected of conniving at such practices. If they were so disposed, detection would inevitably follow, from the numerous formalities required, and the number of persons who must be privy to such a transaction.

136. Have you any further observations to make to the Committee?—I merely wish to add an observation: Mr. Weston stated that the precautions taken in Jersey to prevent fraud were not so complete as in Guernsey, as a mere declaration was required; this change was not effected by the island authorities; they did not diminish the precautions, but it was done by an Act of Parliament, which substituted

tuted a declaration for an oath; and when the persons came to ship corn, the officers of the customs only required a declaration according to the Act of Parliament. The moment it was suspected that advantage might be taken of this change from an oath to a declaration, the states enacted the law I have already alluded to, imposing additional penalties to prevent fraud.

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Lunæ, 8° die Junii, 1835.

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY LABOUCHERE, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. *George Frean*, called in; and Examined.

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137. YOU reside at Plymouth, do you not?—Yes, I do.

138. Have you had any opportunities of observing the corn trade between the Channel Islands and the port of Plymouth?—Yes.

139. In what respect?—Both as a corn-factor and miller.

140. How long have you pursued those two occupations at Plymouth?—More or less for 25 years.

141. In the course of your observations has anything occurred which induces you to believe that any quantity of foreign wheat is introduced into the port of Plymouth as island-grown wheat?—Yes.

142. State to the Committee your reasons for believing that to be the case?—Previous to our grinding the corn we cleanse it; it undergoes first a sifting process; during its undergoing that process I have seen taken out of corn that was lately imported as the last harvest wheat (I do not mean to limit it to the harvest of 1834, it might be 1833), lumps of corn, which I had every reason to suppose were Dantzic, worm-eaten lumps of corn.

143. Do you believe that this practice has prevailed to any considerable extent?—I think that in some samples I have seen I could not point out so many worm-eaten parts as that I have referred to, but in some we have had one-third of Dantzic, more or less.

144. Can you always distinguish with certainty Dantzic corn from island-grown corn?—No, not always; it is only in rare instances it can be detected.

145. But you think there are instances in which you can as confidently assert that the corn you have seen introduced into the port of Plymouth as island-grown corn, was not that corn, but Dantzic?—Yes, as far as my judgment goes, I have no question in my mind.

146. You have no doubt of that having been the fact?—Yes; I have given the more for it on account of believing Dantzic corn to be with it.

147. You were understood to state that the Dantzic-grown corn was the worm-eaten and inferior corn mixed with the good corn?—That was an instance where I could clearly discover the Dantzic corn; but in other instances where I could not say it was Dantzic corn, but yet there was so clearly a mixture of it, that I gave 2 *s.* a quarter more for it.

148. On what grounds did you form that opinion, that this better kind of corn mixed with the island-grown corn, was in point of fact Dantzic corn, and not island-grown corn?—The Dantzic corn is small, and of a very fine nature; the hudd or bran is much thinner than the Jersey corn; also the Jersey corn is what we term weak in the working of it, that is, the bread does not rise so well from it, neither will the baker be so well pleased with the produce of it. Sixty pounds of Jersey corn will not produce so much fine flour as the Dantzic corn.

149. Are the Committee to understand by what you have said, that it is possible upon seeing the corn, pretty well to ascertain whether or not it is wholly island-grown, or whether Dantzic corn is mixed with it?—I take it for granted, when I see grains resembling Dantzic corn, or what we have been in the habit of having from Dantzic, that it is Dantzic corn, and therefore I give a higher price for it; but it is not so plain to me that it is Dantzic corn, as in some instances where if there has been smuggling, and the persons have incautiously put in some old Dantzic

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corn with it; then when I see such mixed with new Jersey wheat, it has appeared to me beyond a doubt that they had put in some old foreign wheat with it.

150. Are you sufficiently acquainted with the wheat, the produce of the Channel Islands, to feel quite certain that the wheat, such as you describe as having been suspected by you to be Dantzic corn, was not, in point of fact, grown in these islands?—I have been in the habit of purchasing it for some years. The quality of Jersey wheat is nearer to Scotch wheat, that is, it is not a very clear white wheat, on account of the thickness of the bran; the Dantzic wheat is of small grain and thin bran or skin.

151. Will you state, in the instances to which you have alluded, what proportions, in your opinion, that wheat which you suspect to have been Dantzic wheat, has borne to the whole quantity of wheat imported from the Channel Islands?—That has varied; in some instances I should have fancied there was one-third, but it is impossible to state that: you see two samples or sorts, and it is impossible to give a very near guess; but I have acted on my judgment, and given proportionably higher the more Dantzic was in it; it was generally sold at a less price than wheat of the same quality. I presumed it was legalized by its being publicly offered, and delivered under the view of the custom-house officer.

152. Do you think it possible for the officers of the customs, on the inspection they generally give to the corn being landed, to detect what you have just told the Committee as to the mixing of wheat?—No, certainly not; it is only the manufacturer that would be capable of doing that: for instance, there is a sort of wheat called Kubanka wheat, which has a different smell, that is detected in the grinding; the custom-house officer could not do that. In this case of the Dantzic corn, where I discovered the worm-eaten grains in bunches, it was by putting it through a fine sieve.

153. It is not on inspection you form your opinion, but on what takes place subsequently, in grinding and working it into flour?—More particularly so. I have found from experience, that the corn so purchased has answered my expectation, and the bread made from it has risen better, that is, made a larger loaf in appearance than if made from Jersey wheat alone; and that has guided me in my next purchase.

154. Can you show to the Committee any samples of the two descriptions of wheat you have mentioned, which would illustrate what you have stated?—Yes.

155. You sent some Kubanka wheat as a sample to Lord Morley, the other day?—Yes, a considerable time since.

156. Do not you think that wheat is of a very inferior quality, inferior to what is generally grown in the island?—Yes, decidedly so in appearance.

157. What sort of price may that description of wheat fetch in the Plymouth market at this present moment, that Kubanka wheat, according to the sample produced?—I think that was offered at, to the best of my recollection, from 3*s.* to 4*s.* a quarter less than the sample of white wheat that came in the same vessel; the captain took it out of some sacks, and stated he had a small quantity of red wheat, and went down and fetched a sample of it. When it comes to be worked it is found to have more intrinsic worth than appears; it is grown in a cold climate.

158. Do you think that if a quantity not very considerable, but to a certain amount, a quantity of that wheat of very inferior quality was brought into the market, that that would be injurious to the farmers, or the neighbourhood of that market, according to the quality of the wheat generally grown in that neighbourhood, or that that would very much depress the markets; any quantity of wheat of that inferior quality?—I do not think that would be so likely to depress the market as the better sort of wheat; it would not be so injurious. The master of a Jersey vessel is generally the agent for selling the corn, and he has orders from the owner of the wheat to bring back the money for it. He comes to a dealer in corn and says, "My price is 45 *s.*" "Oh, we can buy wheat in our market for that, and there we can get our credit and take it away at our leisure, or we can deal with the farmers that we wish to keep up a connexion with, but if we give you gold to carry out of the country, we expect to have it 1 *s.*, 2 *s.*, or 3 *s.* a quarter less than the market price." The neighbour of that miller says, "Such a person has bought Jersey wheat, he is selling his flour at such a price; I must buy wheat of the farmers at that price, or else I shall not be able to compete with him." So that the buyers of Jersey corn stand in a better position than those who have not ready money to deal with them.

159. You

159. You stated that the worm-eaten wheat was that which came from Dantzic, and by that principally you were enabled to distinguish it?—I have seen such in a cargo of wheat that was supposed to have been recently reaped (about two months): in one particular cargo of wheat there were those worm-eaten grains; that I did not purchase, but I saw the man that did, sift out those grains. I can show the Committee how it occurs. I have a sample of such; it gets in bunches by means of insects.

160. Do you imagine it from that circumstance to be Dantzic wheat?—Yes.

161. Then you say it is difficult sometimes to distinguish the Dantzic wheat from the Channel Islands wheat?—Yes.

162. Does the same thing take place with the Channel Island wheat as that worm-eaten?—I never saw an instance of Jersey wheat coming to Plymouth worm-eaten.

163. How do you feel sure that this worm-eaten wheat is not old Channel Island worm-eaten wheat mixed with the new?—It would have been against the probabilities of the case, for they had been sending over as much corn as they could at a very advantageous price, and it is not likely they would keep their corn in store to get depreciated, when they had a fair opportunity of sale. I make a distinction between Guernsey and Jersey. I have not seen instances of Guernsey wheat that I could suspect to be smuggled.

164. It is merely with reference to the Jersey you have any doubt?—Yes, it is fair for me to say that.

[*The Witness was asked to distinguish a particular wheat exhibited to him, which he stated to be Dantzic wheat.*]

165. What is the quantity of wheat you yourself purchase in the course of a year, one year with another, in which Jersey wheat and Guernsey wheat may be more or less mixed up together?—I am not prepared with an answer I could depend on. Sometimes I purchase a lot which consists, varying from 50 to 150 quarters.

166. What does that amount to annually?—I really cannot say with any accuracy; perhaps it is possible I might purchase 500 quarters, I am not aware it is more than that; there are persons at Plymouth who purchase three or four times the amount I do.

167. Are you one of the principal purchasers of corn at Plymouth?—Not of Jersey corn.

168. You cannot say what others do?—No; but I see certain millers in the neighbourhood frequently taking out lots of Jersey corn, at least once a fortnight.

169. Do you find that smuggling is more carried on now than it was?—Within the last two or three years, I should say so.

170. You think you find a greater intermixture of foreign corn with the island corn than you used to do?—Certainly, within the last two years.

171. To what do you attribute that?—To there being a greater inducement; it is a mere matter of opinion, I cannot prove it; there has been a so much greater inducement for the purchaser of Jersey corn, that is, for the dealer in it, to come to England, provided he could put foreign corn with it. For instance, I have heard of corn being sold at Jersey as low as 23*s.* a quarter, the Jersey corn at that time making 46*s.* at Plymouth. I have heard also of farmers bringing in a certain quantity of corn to the corn-dealer, say, for instance, five or ten bushels, he takes back the same quantity of foreign corn, and the difference in money; so that he has as much corn as he brought in, and money to half the amount.

172. At this moment if he imports foreign corn duty free into the islands at a low price, and only sells at a low price in England, is it not a less inducement than when he imports foreign corn cheap in the islands and sells it dear in this country?—I do not see the bearing of the question.

173. When the corn in this country is cheap, is there not a greater inducement than when corn is dear, to bring cheap foreign corn?—There never was a greater than at present, from this circumstance. If they can purchase (as I heard it last week, I cannot say it is correct,) a cargo of corn for 19*s.* a quarter in the islands, supposing that Jersey corn could have been bought of the Jersey farmer at say 40 *s.* (but I believe the price is higher), then there is more than cent. per cent. inducement.

174. Do you mean to say, in the relative price of corn in Jersey and England at this moment, the difference is greater than it ever was before?—Greater than I ever noticed or knew it; in consequence of our very high duties, it having been

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prohibitory so long, there is a greater quantity of foreign corn offering, therefore the price is reduced so very low. Now, though the price may be quoted at Hamburgh at 25*s.* a quarter, and the freight put on that of 3*s.* or 4*s.*, yet the persons when they come to the island for a market, or as it may happen, vessels that want to have a sort of ballast to return, they bring wheat with them, they must sell it at the market price, and take it out even at below cost price. I know where wheat has been a long time in bond, and the weevils having gotten into it (at Bristol), that was sold at 18*s.* a quarter, that was taken to make biscuit, at Guernsey.

175. Your opinion is, that there is a great glut in the Guernsey and Jersey markets of foreign corn?—Either that there is, or that such has occurred within two or three months.

176. Are the Committee to understand you attribute this increased smuggling into the English market to foreign corn having fallen low, having been prohibited so long from this country by the Corn Laws?—That is my opinion.

177. The Guernsey people buy very low, and get a great profit by importing it into this country?—Yes.

178. Can good foreign corn be bought in the islands now at 19 *s.* a quarter?—I have heard so, and I have reason to believe that it is correct.

179. Good foreign corn?—Yes.

180. Do you believe it to be possible for a cargo of unmixed foreign corn to be brought into the port of Plymouth as island-grown corn, without that circumstance being detected by the custom-house officers?—No, I do not think it could.

181. Do you think it possible a cargo, bearing any great proportion of foreign corn mixed with island corn, could be introduced into the port of Plymouth without being detected by the custom-house officers?—That would depend on how careful they had been in obtaining samples similar to their own growth; for instance, some wheat that comes from Hamburgh is so like the growth of Jersey that no one would be able to detect it.

182. If that is the case, why should they not substitute a whole cargo of wheat for island-grown corn, and introduce it without detection into the port of Plymouth?—As far as the custom-house officers have knowledge of corn it might be done, but I do not see how they can bring it to Jersey and get their papers passed.

183. Is not the answer you have just given inconsistent with an answer you gave a short time ago; that though you believed a cargo might be introduced with a portion of foreign wheat, yet that a cargo composed entirely of foreign wheat, in your opinion, would be impossible to be introduced without detection from the custom-house officers?—I reconcile that by saying, that although the custom-house officers might not be able to discern the mixture of foreign corn, yet as there are oaths and certificates required to come with it, I cannot conceive how they can obtain that.

184. Was the wheat to which you allude, as having in your opinion been mixed wheat, was that entered under certificate?—Yes, because it came legally into the market, therefore I conclude it was.

185. Do you remember by what vessel it arrived, and of whom you purchased it?—I would state as a matter of opinion (I am not prepared to prove it), I believe during the last two years, more or less, there has been a mixture of foreign corn come with the wheat, so that I have taken very little notice of one circumstance more than another, except in such glaring instances as where the old Dantzic wheat came.

186. Are you satisfied that the wheat you have described as having been mixed wheat, was purchased by you as island-grown wheat, and entered as such under the certificates?—I expect it was; it could not have come into the market openly, and the custom-house officers deliver it to my cart, else.

187. It could not have come in as foreign wheat?—No.

188. Did it come directly from the ship to your mills?—To my cart? yes.

189. Have you any recollection whatever of the proportions there were, or could you ascertain?—No, I could not; I could show you, by mixing samples, that it is impossible to ascertain the exact quantity.

190. Does Jersey wheat generally come to this country kiln-dried?—No, in its natural state.

191. The foreign wheat that is imported into Jersey, is that kiln-dried?—No, the heat of the foreign climates is sufficient; for instance, even though Russia is a cold

a cold climate, yet they have so much of hot sun that they can keep it a long time good, and Dantzic and other corn also.

192. Is it the custom in Guernsey and Jersey to use much foreign corn for seed?—I cannot speak as to that.

193. As you have been so long in the trade, can you give the Committee any idea in what degree the Jersey and Guernsey wheat influences the market; does it depreciate it to the amount of 2*s.* on the average; that if wheat were prevented from being imported there, the market would rise 2*s.*; you say you purchase it at 2*s.* cheaper?—It might in the Plymouth market; occasionally it has done that, no doubt; but perhaps, if I was to say 1*s.* throughout the year, it would influence the market to that amount.

194. That must have reference to the quantity?—Yes; for the last two or three years we have been receiving small quantities of Jersey corn regularly; it is almost always in the market.

195. You say you are not in the habit of purchasing more than 500 quarters a year?—No, I mention that as the outside; certainly not more than that.

196. Is not the island corn trade rather a new trade; do you remember it five years since, or ten years?—No: I recollect some years ago there used to be a great deal of flour come from the islands; then I understood an inquiry was set afloat; I do not know the circumstances connected with it, but there was reason to suppose there was smuggling; I have no doubt in my mind but a great deal of foreign corn was ground with the flour, and so sent to Plymouth. I understood the authorities at Guernsey undertook to remedy that, and my own opinion is, they did effectually do it, and that they have prevented it ever since at Guernsey. We heard little of Guernsey and Jersey corn for some years; about four years last past, I should say, it has come to the English market.

197. Is it the case that the price of wheat is lower at Plymouth than it is at other parts in the south of England?—This year the harvest in the neighbourhood of Plymouth and Devonshire is not so productive as in Norfolk and Suffolk; I have drawn my supplies principally from Suffolk. Though the price in Plymouth has been dearer, yet I can make good the assertion, that corn would have been 1*s.* per quarter dearer at least at Plymouth, if the wheat had not come from Jersey; for our crop was not so good as some of the counties in the neighbourhood of London.

198. Your answer applies solely to the last season; can you state the season before, if the price of corn was at all cheaper at Plymouth than in any other part of the country?—Plymouth is more or less an importing place for corn, consequently the neighbourhood does not produce corn so cheap at Plymouth as in some other counties.

199. This corn trade has been rather an increasing trade within the last two or three years, has it not?—Yes; certainly within the last two years.

200. Can you account well for that increase?—I considered it was owing to the facilities with which they get their foreign corn (it is a matter of hearsay); that at Jersey the price of the corn of Jersey was as dear as at Plymouth, consequently I could not see how the Jersey corn-dealers could gain a profit by buying Jersey corn and sending it over.

201. Because he must have to pay freight and insurance, and other expenses?—Yes.

202. You say wheat, the produce of the island of Jersey, is as dear as wheat of the like quality at Plymouth?—So I have been told.

203. Have you been at Jersey yourself?—Yes, some time ago. I made some inquiries there then, and found it was as dear. Persons have gone over to Jersey from Plymouth and the neighbourhood, thinking they could purchase cheaper than at Plymouth, but they have invariably found themselves mistaken.

204. That they have not been able to purchase it cheaper?—That they could purchase it cheaper at Plymouth.

205. What, of the island growth?—Yes; I am speaking now of the price; if I were to go now to Jersey and purchase wheat, if the market is as it has been at Jersey, I should gain nothing by it; I should be able to purchase quite as cheap at Plymouth; I mean wheat of the produce of Jersey.

206. What was the price at which you stated good foreign wheat could be bought in the islands of Guernsey and Jersey?—I heard a person say, that he heard of a sample being offered at 19*s.* at Jersey, though I believe a higher price has been generally given for it.

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207. Are the Committee to understand that, in your opinion, equally good island-grown wheat with the foreign wheat, which is sold at 19*s.*, would be sold for any more than 19*s.* in those islands?—Yes, the island; the Jersey farmer can bring his produce to the corn-dealer, and have as much foreign wheat as he brings in Jersey, and half the amount of value of Jersey corn in money besides.

208. In the market of Guernsey and Jersey, where this foreign wheat is selling for 19*s.*, are the Committee to understand that island-grown wheat of precisely the same quality sells for more or less than 19*s.*?—Certainly, double the price; the Jersey corn-dealer certainly gives double the price for Jersey corn that he does for foreign corn.

209. Can you give any reason to the Committee why the corn-dealer in Guernsey and Jersey should give more for island-grown corn than he does for foreign corn, those two qualities of the corn being precisely equal?—That, of course, causes the suspicion that arises in my mind; it is a suspicion; that he does so, I should have no difficulty in proving; I will prove that the Jersey corn-dealer does give a great deal more for Jersey corn than for foreign corn.

210. He does it with a view of exporting?—Yes.

211. Are the Committee to understand that the great difference of price is occasioned by the circumstance of the one species of corn being corn that bears a certificate, and the other that does not bear a certificate?—Yes, that causes the difference; one is corn that is marketable, the other not.

212. For the English market?—Yes.

213. It affords you the opportunity, the island corn affords you the opportunity of mixing foreign corn with it, whereas the foreign corn does not afford you the opportunity of mixing island corn with it?—Yes; if a man is bent on smuggling, how is he to get foreign corn to England? Not unless he has a cover for it.

214. How do you conceive that that great difference of price exists with the facility supposed by some people to smuggle it into this country?—I conceive it to be from the limited quantity of corn that can be so imported into England; I give it as matter of opinion that the quantity of corn that is smuggled is a mere trifle; though I am convinced of the fact, yet the relation it bears to the English corn market is very small indeed; it comes to bear on a particular point, and there the people in the neighbourhood are justly grieved; as to its bearing on England, it is not worth notice.

215. Do you think its bearing on the price of foreign corn in Jersey is not worth notice either?—It appears to me, to a Jersey landowner it must make a difference.

216. The Jersey-grown corn sells at a much higher price than it would perhaps otherwise make, from being a vehicle by which foreign corn can be smuggled into this country by being mixed up with it; that they may send foreign as mixed with Jersey corn, and then there would be a greater demand for Jersey corn than there would otherwise be?—You mean, supposing there was no corn smuggled, and that it was only Jersey corn, it would be worth in the English market less by freight and charges: from information I have heard, I suppose they give as great a price, if not quite as much, in Jersey as they do for it when brought to England.

217. Mr. Borthwick says, "We know there is nothing easier than to ship 600 quarters of wheat and clear the custom-house for 200 only, and the 400 quarters not mentioned may all be foreign; no officer attends the shipment or the delivery." Do you know anything of that?—I should not suppose that likely at all.

218. Is the quantity measured when it comes in under a certificate in this country?—It is, carefully.

219. Have you any suspicion that a fraud is committed with regard to certificates as to the produce; have you any knowledge or any suspicion that frauds may be committed by altering or amending them?—I cannot say of my own knowledge. I asked a respectable dealer in corn at Jersey if he could imagine how it was done, for I may say broadly there is no doubt about it in the trade generally, and I asked him how it was done; he said the farmers or growers of the corn had to go and take an oath to it, that afterwards the dealer in the corn certified, but that somehow or other, between the farmer's oath and the certificate, the dealer could manage to make a difference.

220. You do not know by what means?—I do not.

221. When the samples of the corn imported from the islands are shown to you, you of course judge of the value by the appearance; but is it not often stated to you that they are worth so much more, because there is a mixture of Dantzic or foreign corn with them?—Yes.

Mr. George Frean.

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222. The seller of the corn telling you it is worth so much more, because there is a mixture of foreign corn with it?—Yes, I recollect an instance, not a Jerseyman, but an agent in the neighbourhood of Plymouth: he said, "What will you give me for this?" I mentioned a price. He then stated, "You ought to give me such a price, see, Dantzic corn is with it."

223. Cannot as fine corn be grown in Jersey as at Dantzic; is Dantzic wheat reckoned superior?—I do not think it could be grown so good in Jersey as in Dantzic, for this reason: supposing, for instance, a sample of Dantzic wheat were sown in Jersey, the ground there is so frequently tilled. I know with regard to American corn, when they were in the habit of breaking up ground never before sown, that the flour that came to England was very strong, would "spring," as the technical term is, very much; latterly it is not so. I know also, that when farms have been impoverished, and have been frequently tilled, the corn from the same estate has degenerated very much. Therefore I think, that if Dantzic corn was sown at Jersey, where the ground is tilled very much, it would degenerate. It is a feature of Jersey and Guernsey corn to work weak.

224. Have you the means of knowing of what kind of corn the bread usually consumed in Jersey is made from?—I believe it is made principally from foreign corn.

225. The consumption of the island; the consumption of bread in the island is chiefly that made from foreign corn?—Yes, they can sell their own produce at so much greater profit.

226. How much bread will 18 lbs. of the best English wheat make?—That will depend on the fineness of it.

227. Would 18 lbs. of the best Dantzic wheat make the same quantity as English?—Yes, more. I would say that 18 lbs. of Dantzic wheat makes more flour than 18 lbs. of Kent: Kent is generally quoted as the highest priced wheat.

228. Is there any importation of flour and biscuit from the islands?—Very little flour; there has been a little flour brought within the last 12 or 18 months from Guernsey.

229. Do you know at all what quantity?—I do not; the custom-house returns will give it: I believe there are some returns to that effect; it is very small.

230. Is there much biscuit?—Biscuit is brought in bond; for instance, if I am a holder of foreign corn, I want to turn that into money; or the weevils may have got into it, which hurt corn. (I have known great loss from corn in bond, from weevils eating into it.) I want to make a return of that: if it is manufactured I can make a return of it. While the war was in Portugal, between Don Pedro and Don Miguel, if we could have made it into biscuit or flour we could have sold it. If we send over corn in bond to Guernsey, we can have it there made both into flour and biscuit; we can bring it into Plymouth in bond, and export it in bond: so that in fact it is only the manufacture of foreign corn that is prohibited in England, for large quantities of foreign biscuit are brought to England. I know our fisheries are supplied by foreign biscuit.

231. Cannot you import biscuit from the island free of duty?—I believe not; it would not be worth while; it would be better to have biscuit made from foreign produce, and put it in bond.

232. Would it not be a much easier way of escaping detection, to make biscuit in the island, and export it from thence free of duty?—I can hardly see how it would be worth their while to do it.

233. You say you can detect Dantzic corn among the island corn?—Yes.

234. But not the flour in biscuit?—They would have difficulties in the island.

235. Then you think there is not an importation of biscuit to any extent?—No; this cargo, that went from Bristol to Guernsey, that was purchased at 18*s.*, and also a quantity from Exeter, was purchased, perhaps, at not above one-third of the first cost; that was sent to Guernsey to be made into biscuit, but it can be exported under bond.

236. If you gave an order for so many tons of biscuit to come to Plymouth, could it be received without payment of the duty?—Yes, if it was put into bond.

237. Not for consumption?—Then we pay an *ad valorem* duty if we have it put in for consumption.

Mr. *John Thomas Wright*, called in; and Examined.

Mr. *John Thos. Wright.*

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238. YOU are connected with the custom-house department at Plymouth?—I am Collector there.

239. For how long have you been collector?—Ten years.

240. Of course the state of the trade between the Channel Islands and the port of Plymouth, of wheat and corn, has come under your observation during that period?—It has.

241. Do you conceive that it is possible that any of the wheat that is introduced into the port of Plymouth, as island-grown wheat, is either wholly or in part foreign wheat?—I think it very possible that some foreign wheat may, but in a very small proportion, have been introduced with wheat the produce of the island, but I should say certainly not to any extent.

242. If it took place to any extent, if a cargo professing to be island-grown wheat was either wholly, or in any considerable part, foreign-grown wheat, do you imagine that that could be detected with a certainty by the officers of the customs?—Decidedly not; I think it would be impracticable for a whole cargo of foreign wheat to be imported without detection; but a small quantity, if any such has been introduced, might escape the vigilance of the officers.

243. The question asked was, whether if a cargo composed wholly of foreign-grown wheat, or in any considerable portion of foreign-grown wheat, mixed with island-grown wheat, could be introduced into the port of Plymouth as being wholly island-grown wheat, it would escape the detection of the officers?—Not a whole cargo, certainly not.

244. Do you think a cargo, a very considerable portion of which was foreign-grown wheat, could be introduced into the port of Plymouth without detection?—I think it is very possible a mixture could to a certain extent. I think it could not possibly escape the notice of the officers, supposing it to be two-thirds foreign; I think the officers would be enabled to detect it, if it was to that extent; I do not believe it ever to have been imported to that extent.

245. Would they detect half?—It is impossible for me to say; it is not my duty; it is the surveying and landing waiter's duty to attend to the discharge of the cargoes. My opinion is, it would be difficult to detect it even if there were half.

246. Are you of opinion that, in point of fact, the practice of mixing foreign with island-grown wheat has prevailed to any extent in the wheat imported?—I am of opinion it has not to any extent.

247. Are you acquainted with the nature of the regulations that prevail in the islands themselves to guard against that practice?—Wheat the produce of either of the islands of Guernsey, Jersey or Alderney, cannot be imported into this country free of duty, without a certificate of the produce; that certificate I apprehend is to be obtained on the declaration of the growers before a magistrate, that it is the produce of the islands.

248. Do you believe that system to be a sufficient security against such fraudulent practices?—I think fraudulent practices may exist in obtaining the certificates.

249. Can you suggest to the Committee any improvement in the system of regulations which, in your opinion, would afford a more complete security against fraudulent practices?—I cannot, unless it be by restricting the importation of foreign corn into those islands, except on the same condition as that which apply to corn imported into this country; that would effectually check it.

250. Is it not the case that the produce of the islands is not sufficient for their own consumption?—If it was not found to be sufficient, they might use foreign corn subject to the same duty as is paid on it in this country.

251. Does no other remedy occur to you?—No, I cannot suggest any better.

252. Under what Act of Parliament is it you allow the island corn into this country; some years ago it was prohibited?—The 3 & 4 Will. 4, c. 52, the last Customs' Regulation Act, allows not only the importation of corn, but other goods the produce of these islands, free, on certificate that it is actually the produce; and likewise under some further regulations in chap. 59 of the 3 & 4 Will. 4.

253. You have stated that, in your opinion, the practice of mixing corn and importing it so mixed does not prevail to any great extent?—I am decidedly of that opinion.

254. State your reasons why, when there is great facility for mixing and a difficulty

Mr. *John Thos. Wright.*

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culty of detecting, why you do not think it prevails to any great extent?—I think if it had it would probably have been detected or brought to my notice.

255. You say if it is mixed half and half, there would be great difficulty in detecting it?—I am no judge; my opinion is that the officers then would have some difficulty in detecting it. I believe the gentleman who preceded me has stated that it is only after the process of grinding that he could positively undertake to say it was foreign.

256. Can you give any comparison as to the quantity imported now and that imported 10 years ago?—No, I cannot; I am not prepared to give a statement; the returns are at the custom-house.

257. In point of fact, it is the case, that within the last few years the import of corn from the Channel Islands to Plymouth has very considerably increased?—It has rather increased.

258. To what do you attribute it?—I can assign no reason.

259. Does it come in small quantities?—It varies very much; 30, 40, and as high as 120 quarters.

260. Does it ever exceed 120?—Very seldom; very rarely.

261. Is it as common an article of demand in Plymouth market as any other species?—I do not know how it is disposed of after it gets into the country.

262. You are not aware of an instance of fraud being proved?—No, none to my knowledge.

263. Has not your attention been particularly drawn to the suspicion that there was a mixture of foreign wheat with corn?—Yes.

264. In what manner did the representation come before you?—It was made to the Commissioners of Customs, from whom I know not; a sample of the wheat was sent to the Commissioners of Customs, at least, I presume so; it was received from them. This was a sample of wheat said to be Russian wheat, but it was not stated from what vessel it came, but it was said to have come out of a vessel from Jersey or Guernsey. The sample was shown to the proper officers, the delivering officers, who said they were not aware of having seen any wheat of the kind imported from either of the islands, and doubted its having come from the islands at all, but if it came from those islands they had no knowledge of it, never having seen any of that description; no proof was adduced to us that it was imported from those islands.

265. Do you know what quantity was imported into Plymouth last year?—I do not; the returns are at the custom-house.

266. But those are generally for England?—The quantity imported into the port of Plymouth can be had from the customs; I believe it to be about 2,800 or 3,000 quarters.

267. Has your attention been drawn in any other instance to the wheat imported from the islands?—The delivering officers, the surveyor and landing-waiters' attention was drawn to one or two cases, when it was stated that there was an apparent mixture of foreign with the island corn; the opinion of several persons conversant with the trade was taken by those officers; those opinions were very various, but there was not one of the parties, the officers stated, to whom they so applied who would undertake to prove that it was not the produce of the island, which the certificates purported it to be.

268. Do you happen to know if Plymouth is the principal port for importing the island corn?—I understand it is.

269. Do not you know in what ratio?—I do not know, I have not seen the returns.

270. Do you happen to know if the importation of corn from the Channel Islands has ever been such as to have the effect of lowering the corn market, or the price in the corn market of Plymouth, below that of other parts of the country?—I think it could not possibly have that effect.

271. When this examination took place that you have mentioned, are you aware if any report of it was made to the authorities in the Guernsey and Jersey islands?—I am not aware.

272. When the Jersey corn is imported to Plymouth under certificate, is that corn measured by the custom-house officers?—An account is taken by an officer of the customs, and the corn is measured by a sworn meter, appointed by the mayor and corporation, who certifies the quantity delivered from each ship at the foot of the account kept by the custom-house officer.

273. That which comes in under certificates?—That which is legally and lawfully imported.

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274. In the presence of a custom-house officer?—Yes, the custom-house officer; the tide-waiter takes an account in the book as it is measured by the sworn meter, and those officers are inspected by a landing waiter, and the landing surveyor of the port.

275. Do you happen to have brought with you one of the certificates that usually accompany wheat from the islands?—I have one of them.

[*The same was read, as follows:*]

ISLAND OF JERSEY.

Principal officer's Cocket or Clearance.

KNOW ye, that E. Neal and others do now ship in the Guernsey Lily of Jersey, E. Hamon, master, for Plymouth, or some other port in Great Britain, in bags and loose, about 102 quarters, three bushels wheat, 36 casks, about 1,400 gallons cider, three cows and two calves, *bonâ fide* the produce, or manufactured from materials which were the produce of this island only, and that no article of foreign growth or produce forms a component part thereof.

Given under our hands at the Customs' Office,
the 22d day of April 1835.

John Durell, Principal Officer.
J. Vicden, Controller.

Governor's Certificate.

THESE are to certify, that Elias Neal and others, the aforesaid shippers, have made proof in the manner required by law, that the goods specified in the accompanying clearance cocket, signed this day by the principal officers of the customs' department of this island, are actually of the produce, or manufactured from materials which were the produce of this island only.

Given under my hand in Jersey, the 22d day of April 1835.

By command,

H. Touzel, Colonel.

I, ELIAS HAMON, master of the within-named vessel, do hereby declare that the above certificate was received by me at Jersey, where the goods therein mentioned were taken on board the said vessel, and that the goods so imported are the same as are mentioned therein.

his
Elias × *Hamon.*
mark.

Declared before me at the Custom-house, Plymouth, this 24th day of April 1835. } *J. Wright.*

276. If upon a certificate of 200 quarters of corn, suppose 400 were imported into Plymouth, would not the 200 additional be confiscated?—The excess would be seized; it is very seldom there is an excess; in general rather a less quantity is delivered than the certificate covers. I have known but one instance where there was a surplus, and that surplus was seized, there being nothing to show it was the produce of the island from whence it was stated to come.

277. Seized and sold for Government?—It was seized and subsequently restored, on its being proved to be part of the former cargo, and the produce of the island.

278. That is the only instance?—I recollect only one instance of its having exceeded the quantity expressed in the certificate; generally it is rather less.

279. What was the quantity; nine or ten quarters?—Not exceeding one or two quarters; the officers are particular in the delivery; I think it was a quarter and five bushels, to the best of my recollection.

280. Does the corn come generally in a corn ship, a ship entirely laden with corn?—Very seldom; it generally comes with a few other articles, probably with cider or potatoes; it is very seldom corn comprises the whole cargo; it comes in small quantities.

281. In sacks or bags?—It is very seldom in sacks, generally in bulk.

282. In what class of vessels is it carried?—In vessels of 50 or 40 tons, seldom exceeding 60.

283. Then it is rarely above 50 or 60 quarters come at a time?—There has been, I believe, as much as from 150 to 200; but it is seldom the case.

284. Is flour imported from Guernsey or Jersey?—I am not aware that it is.

285. What

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285. What is the duty paid; does any biscuit come?—Biscuit is occasionally imported from the islands.

286. What is the duty?—Twenty per cent. on the value.

287. That is received for exportation?—Not being accompanied with a certificate of the produce, it pays duty as a manufactured article; being manufactured from foreign corn, the parties could not obtain a certificate that it was manufactured from corn the produce of the island from whence imported, and that there was no admixture of foreign corn with it.

288. Does any biscuit come in under certificate?—No, I never heard of any.

289. If biscuit were to come, accompanied by a certificate that it was made from the produce of the island, would that be admitted?—If it was *boná fide* manufactured from corn the produce of the islands, it would be admitted free of duty.

290. A certificate would be sufficient proof of it?—It would.

291. You do not remember any biscuit being thus admitted into the port of Plymouth?—I do not recollect it.

292. It might come in under the 59th chapter of the 3d and 4th of William 4?—Under the general custom laws, the Consolidation Act.

293. Is any flour admitted from the islands?—I have not seen any; I believe not.

294. Flour would be admitted duty free if it were accompanied by a certificate?—Yes.

295. If it was the growth and produce of and manufactured in the island?—Yes.

296. You do not recollect seeing any such flour?—I do not.

297. There is a great deal of flour and corn cleared out from the islands to the colonies?—I cannot speak as to that.

298. If any such corn as that comes into Plymouth, what would be the effect; could they land it?—Do you mean corn the produce of the colonies coming into this country through the islands?

299. No; corn shipped from Guernsey or Jersey, whether of home growth, as foreign corn; if that were sent out to the colonies, and the ships were to put in at Plymouth, could they land it free of duty?—Decidedly not, without certificates of produce; if landed, it might be warehoused for exportation; if taken out for home consumption it would be liable to duty, according to the average price of corn in this country.

300. Then there is no means of smuggling corn by that means?—I should say not, to any extent.

Colonel *John Le Couteur*, and *Thomas Le Breton*, Esquire, called in; and Examined.

Colonel *John Le Couteur*, and *T. Le Breton*, Esq.

301. (To *Colonel Le Couteur.*) WHAT situation do you hold connected with Jersey?—Colonel of the first regiment of militia, Aide-de-camp to the King, and a Jurat to the Royal Court.

302. Are you a landed proprietor?—I am.

303. To what extent?—About 50 acres.

304. Do you farm that land yourself?—Yes, I farm it myself.

305. You were in the Committee room when the witnesses were examined?—Yes.

306. Have you been in the habit of exporting the corn that you have grown in the island of Jersey to England?—Never, but on one occasion; I sold a small quantity to a corn-factor, I do not know what became of it; I was not aware it was to be sent to England; that was not above five or six quarters.

307. You have heard the evidence of the other witnesses before the Committee on the subject of the trade of corn between the Channel Islands and this country?—Yes.

308. Are there any observations you wish to make to the Committee on the subjects treated of by the witnesses?—I would advert to Mr. Weston's observations. I think they are fully corroborated by the principal officer of His Majesty's customs from Plymouth, who was examined this morning. In one part of Mr. Weston's examination, he states that the corn is sent by quantities of 100, 50 or 40 quarters at a time, and even by 10 quarters, in small vessels. I believe those small quantities, being separately exported, have led to alarm from seeing the number of vessels recorded as arrived with corn, and has caused the impression that large quantities may have been entered at different periods, and has greatly

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exaggerated the belief as to the amount imported from the islands; and the gentleman who was examined to-day made the very same observation, that it did not come in large quantities, but that the corn came in small quantities, in 20, 30, 40 or 120 quarters, and seldom exceeded that quantity. Now, I do certainly assume from that, that the belief and the impression has gone abroad generally, that large quantities have been imported, when there really were only small quantities. This has gone forth generally through the country, and the farmers have complained of it to Members of Parliament, who unfortunately in their speeches have made use of it, as believing probably that such was the fact, and some were endeavouring to lead, I suppose, to the belief that those quantities influenced the price of the market in this country. Now, as it has been proved that those are very small quantities that have been imported, I take it that such an impression must be entirely removed from the minds of the Committee themselves. As to one observation of the quantity of 500 quarters being the usual annual importation that he purchased, the corn-factor who was examined to-day stated, that the profit on the difference of Dantzic over Jersey wheat would be merely on the one-third, as the mixture would scarcely be more than that without being discovered. Now even on that showing, the profit would be so very small, that I cannot imagine (and I entirely deny the fact) that that importation has taken place, that that mixture has taken place. The profit would be so small, it would not be worth while to the Jersey grower to make that mixture, and I do not think that in any instance it has occurred. No proof has been brought before the Committee, they are merely assumptions; and the only fact that would lead the Committee, I take it, to believe that foreign corn had been mixed, as the corn-factor himself seemed to say, the only thing that led him to believe that, was, that some of the Dantzic wheat was in clusters, and stuck together. I wish to say, that I have seen corn in my own granary in one twelvemonth in the same state. I have seen the same circumstance occur in my own barn, from wheat the produce of my own estate, in the course of a season, and that that is a common occurrence if the wheat is not moved repeatedly, or if it is not either winnowed or exposed to the air.

309. Would it not be more easy to detect any species of grain in clusters than otherwise?—Yes, because that particular cluster would most likely be of one sort.

310. That particular sort would be more easily detected?—Yes.

311. Dantzic wheat might be detected among island grain in a cluster, when it would not be detected mixed throughout the bulk?—Yes, and we sometimes grow Dantzic wheat; I have grown it nearly quite as fine as any Dantzic wheat that is imported; it is not smaller, it generally becomes larger, the soil of Jersey being better.

312. You mean to state to the Committee, if you are understood correctly, that it has occurred to you, where you have warehoused your wheat, that it assumes the same character that the Dantzic wheat will when imported?—Yes, if it is not moved and exposed to a current of air.

313. Do you feel confident, that it may not happen in the islands, that a grower of wheat, before he obtains a certificate, may mix a quantity of wheat imported from foreign countries with wheat from his own farm, and then procure a certificate for the whole, and import it in that form?—It could scarcely take place except under perjury, for the person is obliged to come before a magistrate; he generally comes before the magistrate who may reside nearest himself. The properties are so small, that their whole extent and the quantity of corn grown on them is known, and unless he perjured himself such a thing could not take place.

314. The circumstance of the size and nature of the estates being known, would be a security against the quantity being exaggerated of what might be represented as the produce of the island; but there is no other security, is there, with regard to the produce not being mixed produce, except the oath of the grower?—The oath of the grower in the first instance, and then the oath of the shipper.

315. Is there not a strong temptation to the grower to mix the produce in the manner described?—I should very much doubt it, because the price of the best Dantzic wheat, which is nearly equal to that of Jersey wheat, would make it of no advantage to him. It has been stated that good wheat can be got at 19*s*; why, the best Dantzic wheat is not to be got under 28*s*. to 35*s*. I was on a corn committee in 1828, in the island of Jersey, and at that time it was stated in the same way, that corn could be got at very low prices; but corn could then only be got at Copenhagen, the best Dantzic corn, at 54*s*. 4*d*., and it was selling in England at that time at about 65*s*., or some such price. Therefore, it never could

could be to the interest of the Jersey farmer to go to Dantzic and purchase corn at 54 *s.* to sell, or to mix to sell with his own at 67 *s.* in England. I am not positive as to the price, but the best Dantzic wheat now must be about 35 *s.* in the Baltic.

316. Do you mean, you could not buy the best Dantzic wheat at less than 35 *s.*?—I am not prepared to say that. Our own wheat we can only get on the island for about 3 *s.* 4 *d.* a cabot, that is 6 *s.* or 6 *s.* 8 *d.* a bushel, that would be about 54 *s.* a quarter, which is only for the best samples. The inferior samples would not fetch above 2 *s.*, or 2 *s.* 3 *d.*, or 2 *s.* 4 *d.*

317. The best wheat sold for a higher price in the Jersey market than in the English market?—Merely as seed wheat.

318. What is the penalty on the discovery of any mixture of foreign corn?—£. 2. 10 *s.* per quarter, and six months imprisonment and hard labour.

319. Did you ever know that penalty levied?—No; the attorney-general of Jersey stated that.

320. Do you conclude from that, that the fact does not exist?—I conclude from that the practice does not exist.

321. Suppose it did exist, what means could there be of detecting it?—The farmers in Jersey would be so jealous of the risk of losing their privilege, that they would instantly come and complain to the magistrates that some individual had been doing that, and we should lose our privileges: the consequence would be an immediate investigation.

322. If the chief value of the privilege was mixing up foreign with island-grown corn, would it occur then?—No.

323. Do you think the farmers would be jealous among themselves of one doing the thing without the others participating?—No, they would instantly put a stop to it.

324. When this corn is brought for exportation by a corn dealer, does he take an oath, or only certify?—The grower takes an oath; and the corn dealer, I do not know, I think he makes a declaration.

325. Does the corn dealer make a certificate or swear?—I will read the law to the Committee; this is a translation of the law:

[*Colonel Le Couteur read the Law on this subject to the Committee.*]

326. Then it appears he certifies by the affidavit which is made by the grower, but he does not swear himself; but does the corn dealer take an oath or make a certificate?—I am not positive as to that, but I think it is an oath; I have been so very short a time a magistrate that I do not know, having been elected since I am in London.

327. You cannot speak positively?—No; I dare say the attorney-general can.

328. Whether this is by certificate or affidavit, is the point to which the corn-factor deposes the identity of the corn he receives from the grower, and imports into this country?—Yes, he makes a declaration before a magistrate.

329. (To Mr. *Le Breton.*) Can you answer that question?—I am not acquainted, not being a merchant nor acquainted with the details of the shipping, but with the law: the law states merely that the grower shall declare on oath that the corn was grown on his land, and the shipper must deposit the certificate of each grower from whom he has bought the different parcels of corn forming the shipment he makes; he must deposit all these at the custom-house before he can obtain the necessary document to put that on board, the cocket.

330. Is the shipowner obliged to swear or to depose to the identity of the corn that he imports into this country, that it is the same he received from the grower?—I presume the formalities at the custom-house are a declaration substituted for an oath; I cannot speak positively.

331. (To Colonel *Le Couteur.*) Is it common to keep foreign corn and Jersey corn in the same warehouse?—No, I imagine not.

332. You never heard of such a thing?—I do not know that I ever heard or saw such a thing; no, I do not think I did; I am not aware of it myself.

[*Col. Le Couteur delivered in the following Statement, and the same was read.*]

Colonel *John Le Couteur*, and *T. Le Breton*, Esq.

8 June 1835.

STATEMENT, showing the resident Population of *Jersey*, its migrating Population, the *Jersey* Settlements in *North America*, with the quantity of Wheat and Barley it grows, Imports and Exports; which agrees with Mr. Weston's Return to the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs, at p. 10, dated 28 July 1834.

	Qrs.	Qrs.
Annual average quantity of Wheat grown in Jersey, in the five years ending 5 January 1834	12,899	
Ditto - ditto - Barley ditto	3,227	
Ditto - ditto - Wheat imported	20,795	
Ditto - ditto - Barley ditto	3,680	
Add 2,218 cwt. Flour, ditto	630	
		41,231
Deduct exported to the Jersey Settlements:		
Wheat, same average	3,300	
Barley - ditto	226	
Biscuit, 3,061 cwt., ditto	897	
	4,423	
Deduct further of Island growth, exported to England:		
Wheat, same average	1,611	
Barley - ditto	1	
Flour, 22 cwt.	6	
	1,618	
		6,041
Remain for the consumption of 38,000 souls, annually - - - - *Qrs.*		35,190

Population up to 1834, estimated at 38,000.

N. B. Upwards of 10,000 persons visit Jersey annually; some remain a length of time in the Island.

Statement of the *Jersey* Settlements in *North America*.

Employing in	Vessels.	Tons.	Jersey Men.	Natives.
On the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence	27	3,893	517	950
— — New Brunswick	1	87	25	110
— — Cape Breton	10	645	180	660
— — Labrador	14	1,604	298	160
— — Newfoundland	27	2,256	255	800
	79	8,485	1,275	2,680
			Persons 3,955	

Thomas Le Breton, *J. Le Couteur*, } Deputies of the States.

APPENDIX.

Appendix, No. 1.

LETTER from Mr. *J. Le Couteur* to the Right Hon. *Alexander Baring*, &c. &c. &c.

SIR, 121, Regent-street, 2d April 1835.

I HAVE the honour to address you on a subject that has created the greatest alarm and excitement in the Channel Islands, and having been deputed by the States of Jersey with a Memorial from that Assembly to the House of Commons, praying to be heard in defence of their charters, which would be infringed if the notice to The House, which you are said to have given, be correct, "To prevent the exportation of Wheat, the growth of the Channel Islands, into England, duty free." I trust you will pardon me for stating, that as I imagine it must be under the impression that foreign wheat is mixed with that of Jersey growth, I hope that a plain statement of the fact, showing the contrary, may induce you to alter your intention.

In the notice that was given of the proposed Bill, the Isle of Man was coupled with the Channel Islands; but allow me to observe, that the Isle of Man was the *private property* of a nobleman, which has lately been purchased by the Crown, but, in contradistinction, the Channel Islands were a part and parcel of the Duchy of Normandy; hence, by right of William the Conqueror, they became an appanage of the realm of England, or as Mr. Selden calls them, a peculiar of the Crown.

It is to be further said, that the Isle of Man could not be subject to the frequent invasions and alarms the Channel Islands have suffered.

Jersey has been invaded eleven different times. Twice in the reign of King John, again in 1277, when Edward I. pensioned the widows of those who fell; in 1328; in 1368, by the great Du Guesclin with 10,000 French veterans, who were defeated by Jerseymen; in 1410; in 1461, when Sir Philip de Cartaret held the six western parishes six years, and finally recovered the other six from the French; in 1551; in 1651, by the Parliamentarians under General Haines, when at length Elizabeth Castle was the last place in the King's dominions that surrendered; again in 1779, by the Prince of Nassau; and lastly in 1781, by Ruthcourt; and during the last war, Buonaparte constantly kept the islanders in a state of alarm with arms in their hands.

All these attacks but the two last having been resisted singly by Jerseymen, for this indomitable devotion and loyalty to the parent country, the sovereigns of England have conferred on them special favours, by charters and grants which afford them the right of freedom from restraint in commerce, which was of no value in war time, but since the peace has been turned to use.

The complaint is supposed to be that a large quantity of wheat, injurious to the English farmer, has been imported into England from Jersey; now 2,352 quarters, being the average of the last five years, which is somewhat about the surplus of the 17,000 quarters or thereabouts annually grown in Jersey, is really so trifling when compared with the 48,000,000 of quarters consumed in the kingdom, that it does not weigh a feather in the scale; it is as one bushel in 163,000, which would never have been noticed, only that it all happened to go to one port; that quantity being less than the produce of many farms in England in their regular course of rotation, or that of 365 acres at 40 bushels the acre.

The chief object in Jersey is to become a seed market for England, not to export flour.

Varieties from single ears of wheat of the most farinaceous property are now growing, samples of which, pure and unmixed, suited to dry or moist soils or for various climates, can now be shown; one among them will maintain a family of 15 persons three months longer than some inferior varieties.

If this be the design of the Jersey Agricultural Society, surely it must strike the most superficial observer that a fraudulent introduction of foreign or mixed wheat would completely mar the project; and a strong legislative enactment has lately passed to protect both the Jersey and English farmer, which the States of Jersey would doubtless be most ready to submit for your consideration and approval.

As it now is, even Jersey wheat, growing in a warmer climate, is of a finer sample than English wheat, and is suitable as seed for England, as the advantage of seed coming from a warm to a colder climate is an axiom with farmers.

To deprive Jersey of the right of exporting such wheat into England would, though unimportant to the revenue of the empire, be considered in Jersey an infringement of its charter, and would create great inconvenience and distress, as it would alter the value of property, which is purchased in wheat rents that are of a value relative to the sacredness in which their charters are held.

These statements can be established by witnesses, and are more fully set forth in the Memorial which I am charged with, but which I confidently trust your own unbiassed judgment may induce you to think unnecessary after you shall have heard the arguments that will be offered for your consideration by my colleague, the Attorney-General of Jersey, and a deputy from Guernsey, who I expect will arrive here on Saturday, till when I beg you will do me the favour not to proceed in forwarding the proposed Bill through the House of Commons.

(signed) I have the honour to be, &c.

J. Le Couteur.

Appendix, No. 2.

LETTER from *Harry Dobrée*, Esq. to the Right Honourable *Alexander Baring*, M.P. President of the Board of Trade, &c. &c. &c.

Sir, Guernsey, 9th April 1835.

I WAS duly honoured with your Letter of the 20th March, since when the Report of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs, respecting the Corn Trade with this island, dated 29th July 1834, has been put into my hands. This Report states, at page 3, "that the quantity of wheat annually exported from this island to the United Kingdom has for the last five years exceeded the quantity grown by upwards of 2,000 quarters for each year, and that it is manifest therefore that a considerable portion of the wheat so exported has consisted of foreign wheat, and that the only way in which the fraud could have been effected has been by the exporters making false declarations as to the produce of the wheat," by which the Commissioners give plainly to understand that the inhabitants had exported to the United Kingdom 6,444 quarters wheat per annum, *duty free*. Now, Sir, in order to refute so palpable an error, allow me respectfully to point your attention to the Tables in the said Report. At page 8, the quantities of wheat, the produce of this island, exported to the United Kingdom for the last five years and a half, is as follows; viz.—

Year ending 5th January 1830	- - -	255 3/8	Quarters Imperial.
1831	- - -	777 5/8	„ „
1832	- - -	184 4/8	„ „
1833	- - -	31 6/8	„ „
1834	- - -	1448 7/8	„ „
To 21st June 1834	- - -	1215 5/8	„ „

making the total amount 3,913 3/8 quarters, equal to 711 3/8 quarters per annum, only. At page 9, the quantities of *foreign* wheat exported during the periods above specified, amount together to 30,993 3/8 quarters, equal to 5,635 1/8 quarters per annum, and I presume that the Commissioners inadvertently added this latter quantity to the 711 3/8 quarters above mentioned, thereby falling into error. Out of the 30,993 3/8 quarters wheat of foreign growth, a portion was exported to foreign ports and colonies, and the remainder to the United Kingdom as *foreign wheat, and paid duty as such*; so that the island has in reality only exported 711 3/8 quarters wheat, of its growth and produce, to the United Kingdom in each year, on an average. The correctness of the premises would be at once confirmed by a reference from the Honourable Board of Customs to their principal officers here.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Harry Dobrée,*

Member of the Chamber of Commerce.

Appendix, No. 3.

LETTER from Mr. *Daniel de Lisle Brock* to the Right Honourable the Lords of the Committee of Council for Trade, &c. &c. &c.

My Lords, Colonnade Hotel, 20th April 1835.

ON the 9th instant I had the honor to address a Letter to the Right Honourable Henry Goulburn, who notified to me that he had transmitted the same to your Lordships.

That Letter was for the purpose of showing that the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs had, in their Report, committed the most unaccountable errors, and most unjustifiably accused the islands of direct fraud; specifying, in particular, that in Guernsey, where 4,505 quarters only were grown, 6,444 quarters had been exported annually, on the average of five years.

It was not possible for me to ascertain whence the error proceeded, whether from mistaking the aggregate for the average amount, or from adding the foreign grain exported to the grain of the island, whether it were the one or the other, or both, is of little consequence. The mis-statement exists; instead of the exportation of Guernsey corn having been 6,444 quarters annually on the average of 5 years, it has amounted to only 539 quarters.

This mis-statement not only subsists, but it is printed and distributed; and a false impression, prejudicial to the character of the islands, is gone abroad, under the authority of His Majesty's

Majesty's Government. Your Lordships promised that the Commissioners of Customs should be called upon to explain and account for the said mis-statement. The Deputies of the Channel Islands are naturally anxious to know if the Commissioners have done so; and, in the name of the Deputies of both islands, I beg leave to be favoured with a copy of their answer.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Daniel de Lisle Brock,*
Bailiff of Guernsey.

Appendix No. 4.

OBSERVATIONS on a REPORT of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs on the CORN TRADE in the *Isle of Man*, and the Islands of *Guernsey* and *Jersey*.

THIS Report was ordered by The House of Commons to be printed on the 23d March 1835. Notice was given by Mr. Baring, President of the Board of Trade, of a Bill, founded on that Report, to be brought in on Tuesday, 14th April.

Before that time, the Channel Islands felt considerable alarm and excitement at the groundless charges preferred against them, and at the projected invasion of their rights. They named Deputies to defend those rights; and the Deputies from Jersey, arriving first in London, discovered the fallacious nature of the Report, represented it to the Board of Trade, and communicated the same to the Deputy from Guernsey. He, with the advice of the said Deputies, wrote immediately to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State, to solicit the protection of His Majesty's Government.

The Deputies rely on that protection; and whatever may be the wishes and attempts of interested parties, they know it to be impossible that any government should lend its influence to the adoption of legislative measures injurious to any part of His Majesty's dominions, when known to be grounded on a mis-statement.

The Deputies are ready to prove the grossest errors in the Report: they can do so by means of the Report itself. The quantities of corn exported from the Channel Islands to Great Britain are so very insignificant, that ridicule must have attached to any attempt to legislate on that ground; even when erroneously magnified, as they are in the Report, the amount would not warrant interference: it is only the proof of fraud that could do so. And that proof is attempted to be established by representing the quantity exported from Guernsey as exceeding by one-half the whole quantity grown. No legislative interference or prohibition could be too strong for such a fraud. We deny its existence,—we solemnly protest against the charge,—and by this appeal to men of all parties who still prefer truth, justice and fair play to party views of any question, we are anxious to remove the false impression left on the minds of those Members to whom the Report has been distributed, and to rescue the character of our country so cruelly, so unjustifiably aspersed.

To every man able and willing to investigate the question, it will appear that on the score of fraud there is not even a shadow of suspicion; and on the quantity exported from the islands to Great Britain, proved to be so very insignificant, that a legislative measure is totally uncalled for. *De minimus non curat Lex.*

For the assistance of those who examine the Report of the Commissioners of Customs, we beg leave to refer them to page 3 of that Report, where the annual quantity of grain exported to the United Kingdom is stated to be—

	Wheat.	Barley.
From Guernsey	6,444 quarters.	226 quarters.
Jersey	7,358	2,037

Whereas the true statement, taken from Mr. Weston's own Returns, at pages 10 and 12, is—

	Wheat.	Barley.	Report.	Real Export.
From Guernsey	539	86	6,444	539
Jersey	1,611	1	7,358	1,611
			226	86
			2,037	1
			16,065	2,237
			2,237	
			13,828	

Being an erroneous return of 13,828 quarters against the two islands, instead of the correct average of five years, amounting for the two islands to 2,237 quarters exported. Or the produce of an estate of 700 or 750 acres.

(signed) *Thomas Le Breton,* } Deputies of the States
J. Le Couteur, } of Jersey.

Colonnade Hotel, 15th April 1835.

Daniel de Lisle Brock,
Deputy of the States of Guernsey.

Colonnade Hotel, Charles-street,
Sir, 9th April 1835.

WHENEVER absent from my post in Guernsey, it is my duty to communicate to you the cause officially. In the present case, the States of that island have deputed me to London to watch over the rights and interests of the inhabitants, and I have the honour to solicit for them your protection and that of His Majesty's Government.

Such protection was never more required than at this time, when notice has been given by the President of the Board of Trade of a Bill tending to deprive the islands of their undoubted rights, and when that notice has been preceded by assertions in the public prints attributed to the same high authority, that the proofs of fraud from Guernsey in the exportation of corn were indisputable.

My motive, in accepting the trust reposed in me by the States, was to examine and refute those assertions: many gentlemen were better qualified than I was, by their ability and knowledge, to discuss the merits of the question; but having had from my situation the making out of the Returns, the passing of the certificates of produce, having, I may say, followed the whole process of cultivation and shipment of the corn exported, no other man could speak with the same precision to the facts of the case. It may well be supposed that, on my arrival here last night, I was extremely anxious to discover the grounds of the imputation alleged against us. The Report of the Commissioners of Customs, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on the 23d March 1835, was, however, only put into my hands this morning by the Deputies of Jersey, who had themselves just discovered the extraordinary circumstances connected with that Report, which it is my duty, Sir, to lay before you. The annual quantity of wheat grown in Guernsey is stated at 4,505 quarters, and the quantity exported to the United Kingdom at 6,444 quarters; after which the Report is made to observe—"Thus it would appear that the quantity of wheat annually exported from Guernsey to the United Kingdom, has exceeded the quantity grown in the island by upwards of 2,000 quarters, and it is manifest, therefore, that a considerable portion of the wheat so exported has consisted of foreign wheat; and the only way in which the fraud could have been effected, has been by the exporters making false declarations as to the produce of the wheat."

A false view of the growth and exportation of corn is taken in a similar manner with respect to Jersey; and on these false views the Report proceeds throughout. It is clear that the aggregate amount of the corn exported for five years has been mistaken, and represented as the average of the annual exportation during that period. If the error had been confined to one Table and to one island, it would naturally be ascribed to accident; but where the error is repeated for both islands, and the whole of the argument against them is grounded on such double error, it bears a mysterious appearance difficult to be accounted for, since the subsequent Tables were of a nature to remove all doubts on the subject. Those Tables prove, not that 6,444 quarters were annually exported from Guernsey; not that the exportation exceeded by 2,000 quarters the amount of all the corn grown; but truly and simply, that out of 4,505 quarters grown annually, the average exportation had amounted annually to 539 quarters.

The Commissioners have been much more ready to accuse the island of fraud than they were warranted to be; for independently of their own gross and manifest error already noticed, by which the whole country have imbibed unfounded prejudices against us, they refer to the letters they had received from Mr. Weston, a very intelligent officer, whom they had sent from Weymouth to investigate the matter: and he says, that in prosecuting his "inquiries, it appeared to be the opinion of those with whom he had an opportunity of conversing, that foreign corn had so found its way into the United Kingdom, although a single instance could not be adduced in which it could be substantiated, or even a surmise as to its probable extent; and after a strict inquiry and a close investigation of the means which must have been resorted to by those engaged in this species of fraud, I am fully satisfied that it cannot have been carried on to any extent."

And farther, Mr. Weston adds,—"But on no occasion could I discover rents so paid had ever been exported as of island produce, the Royal Court, by their practice, strenuously opposing any infringement of their privileges; an instance of which was brought before me by an officer of the Court, subsequently corroborated by others, of an individual who had purchased a quantity of tithe corn, not being allowed to swear to its produce so as to entitle him to its free exportation into Great Britain, as the practice of the Royal Court, in requiring in each case the oath of the grower, could not be dispensed with." And yet, in the face of such a letter the Commissioners do not scruple to accuse the island of fraud. Mr. Weston does indeed say that it was the opinion of some that foreign corn had found its way into the United Kingdom. If the opinion of the agricultural electors all over England were asked, they would probably say the same thing, and it would be found, as Mr. Weston found in Guernsey, after a strict inquiry, that not a single instance could be adduced or substantiated.

Is it upon such grounds that persons or communities shall be deprived of their rights? and are those possessing the largest masses of property ready to give such an example of disregard to the rights of property and the first principles of civilized society, by trampling, in the confidence of their strength, on the rights and property of the weak, although held by titles as valid and as sacred as the richest individual can exhibit for his own wealth?

It has been shown, from the tables in the Report, that the quantity of corn exported from Guernsey to the United Kingdom is only 539 quarters. Shall such a quantity be a sufficient ground for legislation, much less for spoliation? Let us suppose a case of modern date, that of the Mauritius annexed to the British Crown by the last treaty of peace, under the compact that her colonial produce should be admitted into the United Kingdom on the same terms as the produce of Jamaica; Would England be justified in breaking that compact because

because of the complaints or prejudices of the Jamaica planters? Our compact with England, in its origin still more sacred, has been ratified not by one treaty, but by every treaty of peace concluded since the Conquest, every war that preceded such a peace having been marked by our devotion and loyalty to the British Crown, and by the performance, therefore, on our side, of the conditions under which the compact was formed, and has since been held.

It is unfortunately true, that the agricultural interest is depressed. It is wrong, it is ridiculous to ascribe any part of that depression to the Channel Islands. The four islands do not contain twenty-five thousand acres fit for cultivation—meadows, orchards and gardens included. How can this, with any man of reflection, be held up as an object of jealousy to the land-holders, many of whom are owners of estates to a larger extent? Our connexion with England can indeed in no way be injurious to her; her commodities, produce and manufactures are freely admitted, to an amount exceeding tenfold the value of our produce which she so reluctantly takes in return. The trifling quantity of corn exported from the islands, and which the Commissioners of Customs cannot make to be more than 2,151 quarters of wheat and 86½ quarters of barley annually *from all the islands*, on the average of five years, is not sufficient to feed one-half, or any thing like one-half, of the persons employed in England for the supply of the islands. England trades with no part of the world so advantageously as with the islands in proportion to their extent. The goods exported by her to the islands amount to at least 500,000*l.*, while the produce she takes back does not amount to 120,000*l.*: must we receive all and send nothing back? Such a system is too barbarous for the nineteenth century, and how it could enter into the thoughts of those specially appointed for the encouragement of trade is inconceivable. Some persons are disposed to account for it by reasons unconnected with trade, and dependent only on local and agricultural prejudices; if so, it is in vain to argue; and all I must say is, that I cannot think it possible that any statesman should be found, in this country, ready to sacrifice the rights and interests of the smallest community, for the purpose of flattering such prejudices, and should venture to do so, because the community injured is weak and helpless.

Confident in the justice of our cause, and in the honour as well as justice of His Majesty's Government,

I have, &c.

(signed) *Daniel de Lisle Brock*, Bailiff of Guernsey.

The Right Honourable Henry Goulburn, &c. &c.

My Lord, Tavistock Hotel, Covent Garden, April 14, 1835.

We feel it to be our duty to call the attention of your Lordship to some very important errors contained in the Report of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs respecting the Corn Trade in the Isle of Man, including also the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey, dated 29th July 1834.

The Commissioners, in page 3 of that Report, say "From the best information we have been enabled to obtain, it would appear that the annual quantity of grain grown in Guernsey and Jersey is as follows:

	Wheat.	Barley.
Guernsey - - -	4,595 quarters.	3,789 quarters.
Jersey - - - -	10,347 - - -	2,897 "

The above amount, as far as relates to Guernsey, is correctly stated; but we have to complain that the same accuracy does not exist in the statement of the average for Jersey, which is taken from an Abstract (page 15), made from a Return (page 14), signed by Major-General Thornton, showing the proportion of land then under cultivation of wheat and barley, the average produce per acre, and the total quantity of wheat and barley at that average which the island may be expected to produce from the crop of 1834. This document, which if complete would be undeserving of attention, unless no other means of procuring correct information could be found, is very imperfect, as appears by the Return itself, wherein it is said "that no statement of ground under cultivation had been received from the parishes of St. Laurens and St. Helier." Thus two very fertile parishes are entirely omitted from the calculation, the produce of which amounted, in the year 1833, to 2,093 quarters of wheat, and 451 quarters of barley. The difference between the estimated and the real produce will be fully accounted for, when it is considered that the estimated average produce of a vergée is stated at only thirty cabots, when it is a well known fact that good lands yield generally forty, and those of an inferior description seldom less than thirty cabots per vergée. We cannot understand how the Commissioners, in their Report to the Board of Trade, could have been induced to take the average produce of the island of Jersey from this evidently incorrect and incomplete Return, rather than from an authentic document prepared by a Committee of the States, the accuracy of which is unquestionable. This Return (page 10), proves the average for five years, from 1829 to 1833, to be annually 12,499 quarters of wheat and 3,227 quarters of barley, instead of 10,347 quarters of wheat and 2,897 quarters of barley, as stated in the Report, thereby erroneously representing the annual produce of Jersey in corn as less by 2,152 quarters of wheat and 330 quarters of barley, than is really the case.

We also beg to bring under your notice another extraordinary error in the Report (page 3), where the annual quantity of grain exported to the United Kingdom is stated as follows:—

	Wheat.	Barley.
Jersey - - - -	7,358 quarters.	2,037 quarters.

We are unable to discover the source whence this amount has been obtained. It is, however, correctly stated by Mr. Weston, in another part of the Report (page 10), to be wheat. 1,611 ; barley, 1. It is, therefore, quite clear, that no reliance can be placed in a Report containing such a variety of palpable mis-statements.

We also consider ourselves bound to protest against the reasoning and conclusions of the Commissioners of His Majesty's Customs, who, without any just or sufficient grounds, assume that frauds have been committed in Jersey, similar to those with which they charge Guernsey, although Mr. Weston, in his communication to them, says, "I could not obtain any proof of the fact, or the slightest information by which it could be corroborated."

It is not now our intention to prove, as we have the means of doing, that the measure proposed to be submitted to Parliament would be a direct infringement of the rights of His Majesty's subjects, inhabitants of Jersey, and a violation of the charters and immunities granted and confirmed to them by a long line of kings. We reserve for a future occasion the particulars of these privileges, and the foundation on which they rest.

We request, on behalf of the people of Jersey, whom we represent, that a measure founded on a Report, manifestly erroneous and deceptive, may not be precipitately carried, and thereby irreparable mischief done to our island. We trust that such a postponement as may allow of correct information being obtained and considered by the Members of the British Legislature will be granted to us, feeling convinced that His Majesty's Government cannot desire to proceed upon a statement so fallacious as that which is alleged to be the ground of the intended Bill.

We have the honour to be, &c.

(signed) *Thomas Le Breton,* } Deputies of the States
J. Le Couteur, } of Jersey.

To the Right Honourable the President
of the Board of Trade, &c. &c.

Appendix No. 5.

LETTER from *James Stephen,* Esq. to *Thomas Lack,* Esq.

Sir, Colonial Office, Downing-street, 9 May 1835.

In obedience to the commands of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, signified to me by yourself, I have perused and considered various papers which have been laid before their Lordships on the subject of the importation of corn into the United Kingdom from Guernsey and Jersey.

The questions agitated in these papers respecting the frauds imputed to the inhabitants of the Channel Islands, by the Commissioners of Customs, and respecting the consequences of which the proposed restrictions would be productive, either on their commercial welfare, or on the agriculture of Great Britain, I notice only to remark that I pass them by as beyond my competency. I limit myself to the inquiry, whether the rights of the Channel Islands would be violated by subjecting to import duties, their corn when imported into the United Kingdom, or by prohibiting such importations.

The question of right depends entirely on the four charters, of Richard II. of Queen Elizabeth, of Charles I. and of Charles II. If there be any other royal grants affecting the decision, I have not succeeded in procuring copies of them.

Of the four charters I have enumerated, I find only that of Queen Elizabeth at full length. In Berry's History of Guernsey, at page 89, occurs an extract of Richard II. charter; while that of Charles II. is exhibited at page 327 of the same book, only in the form of an epitome or abstract. At the same place may be seen, not a transcript of Charles II.'s charter, but merely a copy of the warrant to prepare the Bill, with which however it may be presumed that the letters patent ultimately issued, were in strict accordance.

The charters of Richard II. and of Elizabeth do not appear to me to have much, if any, bearing upon the present question. The rights they confer are rather personal than local; that is, they give to the people of the Channel Islands, privileges the most ample, and immunities the most perfect, in all English ports and markets; but ascertain nothing respecting the terms on which trade was to be carried on between those possessions of the Dukes of Normandy, and the hereditary dominions of the Crown of England. The words of Elizabeth's charter are indeed so comprehensive, that if fulfilled according to the letter, they would exempt the people of Guernsey and Jersey from every species of custom, toll and tribute, within this realm. The amplitude of the terms therefore demands some abridgement, in order to fulfil what must have been the real intention of their royal author. She obviously meant nothing more than that a Guernsey man, in a British port or market, should be as an Englishman enjoying the same advantages and the same exemptions. The style of the instrument seems to me to demonstrate, that relief, from what in later days has acquired the name of discriminating duties, was the real object of the grant, although amidst the accumulation of verbose legal phraseology, the sense almost escapes detection.

But the charter of Charles I. is more specific and intelligible. I quote from the abstract prepared for the Privy Council by the Attorney General in the year 1667, the following passage, amidst the enumeration of the privileges which Charles I. had granted, "Not to pay customs of or for wares or merchandizes, arising or made within the islands, which shall be transported into England, for and in respect of the transportation." I know not how to assign to this language a lower sense, than that the intercourse between the Channel Islands and this kingdom, in the goods, produce and manufactures of the former, should be placed on the footing of the coasting trade. The improvidence of such an arrangement, (if improvident it be) is scarcely an argument against this construction of it. The motives which Charles I. had for securing, and those which his son had for rewarding, the fidelity of

the

the islanders, were quite strong enough to induce monarchs of far greater foresight to hazard such inconveniencies as may be apprehended from the transfer to England of the whole harvests of Guernsey and Jersey. Indeed, I am not aware that the modern anxiety for the protection of English corn growers, influenced men's minds as early as the reign of Charles II., however passionate may have been the efforts made in that reign for the defence of our graziers against Irish cattle. Such opinions acquire their dominion by movements so wayward and capricious, that perfect indifference about imported corn, with the utmost enthusiasm against imported bullocks, may very possibly have characterized the public mind at the same moment.

If these charters were of a more recent date, the validity of them might admit of serious dispute. But in the reign of Richard II. no man doubted, and in that of Queen Elizabeth no one presumed to question the prerogative of the Crown to regulate the external commerce of the kingdom. Even in the reign of Charles II., and at a still later period, the same powers were exercised, without any formal Parliamentary protest. To titles resting on such a foundation it would, I think, be idle to oppose any theory of the British Government, or any abstract constitutional maxims.

Peremptory as the terms of Charles I.'s grant, and of Charles II.'s confirmation of it may be, it is yet evident, and is indeed admitted by the deputies themselves, that the Legislature is entitled to take such securities as may be necessary to counteract any fraudulent use of the privileges which the grantees enjoy. But any such measures must be vindicated by the proof of a real, not an imaginary danger; and must be narrowed within the limits of the necessity in which it originates.

I am therefore of opinion, that to forbid the importation of any corn grown in the Channel Islands into England, or that to subject any such corn to an import duty, would be an invasion of the charters of Charles I. and Charles II., but that if adequate grounds exist for believing in the reality of the imputed frauds, those charters do not forbid the enactment of any laws requisite for the prevention of such frauds in future.

I have, &c.
(signed) *James Stephen.*

Appendix, No. 6.

To the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade.

My Lords,

Mr. Lack having, by his Letter of the 7th instant, signified that he was commanded by your Lordships to call our attention to the statements contained in our Report of the 29th July last relative to the corn trade of the Channel Islands, with particular reference to that part in which the quantities of wheat and barley exported from Guernsey and Jersey respectively to this kingdom, on an average of five years, are set forth, and where it is remarked that those exports of wheat in the case of Guernsey exceed the whole growth of the island by upwards of 2,000 quarters, which your Lordships had observed did not appear to be quite consistent with the Appendix to the Report; and as it had been pronounced to be erroneous by persons coming from the Channel Islands, your Lordships were desirous of having the means of checking the account of exports from thence with the actual imports into this country; and that your Lordships therefore desired that we would transmit an account of the quantities of wheat, wheat flour and barley which were imported into this country from Guernsey and Jersey respectively in each of the last five years, and to accompany the account with any explanations of the matter in doubt which we might think would tend to effect the desired elucidation;

In obedience to your Lordships' commands,

We beg to transmit for your Lordships' information an account marked (A.) showing the quantity of wheat, wheat flour and barley imported into this country from Guernsey and Jersey in each of the six years ending the 5th January 1835.

And with reference to the note at the foot of this account, your Lordships will observe that we cannot give the quantities of corn so imported from Guernsey and Jersey *separately* into this country, as required by your Lordships, in consequence of the Returns from the different out-ports not having furnished sufficient information for that purpose. With respect to the point upon which your Lordships desire explanation, we have to state, that in the accounts annexed to our Report of the 29th July last before-mentioned, the average annual quantities of wheat and barley exported from the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey to the United Kingdom during the five years ending 5th January 1834, were stated as follows, viz.:

	WHEAT.			BARLEY.		
	Island Produce.	Foreign Produce.	TOTAL.	Island Produce.	Foreign Produce.	TOTAL.
	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.
From Guernsey - -	539	6,374	6,913	86	1,951	2,037
„ Jersey - -	1,611	3,300	4,911	1	226	227
		Total Wheat -	11,824		Total Barley -	2,264

And although these quantities do not exactly correspond with the quantities specified in our said Report, the quantities of foreign from British not having been distinguished, yet it clearly appears that the total average annual quantity of wheat, including foreign as well as island produce, exported from Guernsey amounted to 6,913 quarters, a quantity which exceeded that which had been actually grown upon the island by upwards of 2,000 quarters, as stated in our Report.

The quantity exported being - -	6,913 quarters
The quantity grown being - - -	4,595 „
	2,318

With reference, however, to the total quantity of wheat imported into the United Kingdom, as shewn in the Account herewith transmitted, marked (A.) (which information was not before us at the time we made our former Report), and assuming that the quantity imported as of island produce was *bonâ fide* the produce of Guernsey and Jersey, it would appear that foreign wheat has not been improperly introduced into this country to any great extent. It is to be observed, that in the accounts transmitted to us of the quantities of corn exported from Guernsey and Jersey, the officers did not distinguish the places to which the *foreign* corn had been exported, and we had therefore inadvertently assumed that the whole quantity had been exported to the United Kingdom, whereas it now appears that a great portion thereof had been exported to places other than to the United Kingdom; the average annual quantity exported to the United Kingdom having only been as follows, viz.—

	Foreign Wheat.	Foreign Barley.
From Guernsey - -	4,951 quarters	146 quarters.
Jersey - - -	2,208 „	100 „
	7,159	246

The quantities therefore should stand thus:—

	ANNUAL AVERAGE For Five Years, ending 5th January 1834.		TOTAL of the TWO ISLANDS.	
	Wheat.	Barley.	Wheat.	Barley.
	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.
Quantity of Wheat and Barley grown in Guernsey	4,595	3,789		
Ditto - - - - - - - - - - in Jersey -	12,899	3,227		
			17,494	7,016
Quantity of Foreign Wheat and Barley imported into Guernsey - - - - - - -	18,494	5,967		
Ditto - - - imported into Jersey - -	20,795	3,680		
			39,289	9,647
Quantity of Island produce exported to the United Kingdom from Guernsey - - - -	539	86		
Ditto - - from Jersey - - - -	1,611	1		
			*2,150	87
Quantity of Foreign produce exported from Guernsey	6,374	1,951		
Ditto - - - - - - - - - from Jersey -	3,300	226		
			9,674	2,177
Quantity of the above Foreign produce exported from Guernsey to places other than the United Kingdom - - - - - - - -	1,423	1,805		
Ditto - - - from Jersey - - - -	1,092	126		
			2,515	1,931
Quantity of the above Foreign produce exported from Guernsey to the United Kingdom - -	4,951	146		
Ditto from Jersey to ditto - - - -	2,208	100		
			†7,159	246
Quantity of Island produce imported into United Kingdom from Guernsey and Jersey - -	* 2,142	171		
Quantity of Foreign produce - ditto - ditto - -	† 7,019	347		

We have further to observe, that all the wheat and barley imported into the United Kingdom from Guernsey and Jersey, since the year 1831, has been entered duty free, the same having been accompanied with certificates in proof of the same being *the produce of the islands respectively*, and that the quantity of wheat so imported has progressively increased, the quantities being as follows, viz.—

In 1832 - - - -	1,939 quarters.
1833 - - - -	5,235 „
1834 - - - -	5,860 „

The former inquiry not having included the year 1834, we have obtained returns of the quantities of corn exported from the said islands during the year 1834, copies of which, marked

marked (B.) and (C.), are annexed for your Lordships' information, having only to observe that the quantity of wheat of island produce exported from thence to the United Kingdom during that period, is 5,154 quarters, whereas the quantity entered as such in the United Kingdom during the same period is 5,860 quarters, making a difference of 706 quarters, which may probably be accounted for by the shipment at the close of the year 1833 not having been landed in the United Kingdom until the beginning of the year 1834.

Custom House, 9th May 1834. (signed) *R. B. Dean*, *W. Lushington*, *H. Legge*, *J. W. Maberly.*

—(A.)—

RETURN to an ORDER of Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade, dated 7th April 1835, requiring—

AN ACCOUNT of the quantity of WHEAT, WHEAT FLOUR and BARLEY which was imported into this country from *Guernsey* and *Jersey* respectively, in each of the last Six Years.

YEARS.	Imported from Guernsey and Jersey.								
	WHEAT.			WHEAT FLOUR.			BARLEY.		
	Foreign.	Produce of the Islands.	TOTAL.	Foreign.	Produce of the Islands.	TOTAL.	Foreign.	Produce of the Islands.	TOTAL.
	Quarters.	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*	*Cwts.*	*Cwts.*	*Cwts.*	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*
1829	11,178	346	11,524	1,765	- -	1,765	549	210	759
1830	16,590	1,708	18,298	1,244	- -	1,244	60	144	204
1831	7,329	1,485	8,814	3,850	- -	3,850	1,128	488	1,616
1832	- -	1,939	1,939	1	215	216	—	—	—
1833	- -	5,235	5,235	88	693	781	- -	15	15
1834	- -	5,860	5,860	713	- -	713	- -	171	171

The foregoing account exhibits the quantities of wheat, flour and barley imported from Guernsey and Jersey *jointly.*

The importations from each island separately cannot be shewn, the separation not being made in the returns transmitted to the Inspector-General from the ports.

Inspector-General's Office, Custom House, London, 11 April 1835. (signed) *William Irving.*

—(B.)—

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY.

A RETURN of the Quantity of CORN Exported from this Island to the United Kingdom during the Year ended the 5th January last; distinguishing Foreign Corn from Corn the produce of this Island.

	FOREIGN CORN.			PRODUCE of the ISLAND.		
	Wheat.	Barley.	Oats.	Wheat.	Barley.	Oats.
YEAR	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*	*Quarters.*
Ending 5th Jan. 1835	- nil -	- nil -	- nil -	1,387 2/8	138 2/8	- nil.

Custom House, Guernsey, 21 April 1835. (signed) *Jn° Radford,* D. Cont.

—(C.)—

ISLAND OF JERSEY.

AN ACCOUNT of GRAIN and BISCUIT Exported to the United Kingdom during the Year ending 5th January 1835; distinguishing this Island's produce from Foreign.

ISLAND PRODUCE.		FOREIGN PRODUCE.	
Wheat.	Barley.	Peas.	Biscuit.
Imp. Qrs.	*Imp. Qrs.*	*Imp. Qrs.*	*Cwts.*
3,767	32	30	133

N.B.—No other description of grain, nor any flour, exported as above during said period.

Customs Office, 22 April 1835. (signed) *John Durell,* Pl Offr Comptr.

Appendix, No. 7.

LETTER from *Daniel de Lisle Brock*, *Thomas Le Breton* and *J. Le Couteur*, Esquires, to the Right Honourable *C. P. Thomson*, &c. &c.

Sir, Colonnade Hotel, 18 May 1835.

The Second Report of the Commissioners of Customs is so far satisfactory, that it establishes the correctness of the account stated in the observations on the first Report which we had the honour to lay before you. It proves, as we said, that during the five years ending on the 5th January 1834, the annual average of corn of all sorts exported from the Channel Islands to the United Kingdom, as of their growth, had been only 2,237 quarters.

It proves that, on the average of those five years,

	Wheat.	Barley.	Total.
	Qrs.	*Qrs.*	
Guernsey had exported annually -	539	86	625 } quarters of its
Jersey ditto - - - - -	1,611	1	1,612 } own growth.
	2,150	87	2,237

Instead of the 16,065 quarters stated in the First Report, the Commissioners are compelled to admit the correctness of the above account. It appears to us they should have done so by a more frank and explicit retractation of the charge of fraud against the islands. Far from so straitforward a course, they labour at a justification, which seems to imply a wish to leave the islands under that imputation, and they attempt to prove that they were right in saying that Guernsey had exported a quantity which exceeded that which had actually been grown upon the island by upwards of 2,000 quarters.

The quantity exported being - - - - - - - - -	6,913 quarters.
The quantity grown - - - - - - - - - -	4,595
	2,318

To make this out, they add to the - - - - - - -	539 quarters.
of Guernsey growth, all the foreign corn exported to England and to other parts, say - - - - - - - - - -	6,374
	6,913

There appears to us something disingenuous in this mode of justification. The charge against Guernsey had no reference to foreign corn imported, and having paid duty *as such*, but was for having exported, as the growth of the island and under false declarations, two thousand quarters more than it had grown; whereas, instead of this, declarations were made for no more than 539 quarters, and no more was exempted, as Guernsey corn, from the payment of duty.

The retractation of the Commissioners should have been, it also appears to us, not only more frank and explicit, but more prompt. They were made acquainted with the errors in their First Report on the 7th April; they knew that it was printed and distributed among all the members of the House of Commons, and they must have been aware of the unfavourable impression against the island which such a document, published under the sanction of a Public Board, must necessarily produce; and yet they suffer a month to pass before they admit the errors they had committed, although, when pointed out to them, a few hours were sufficient to obtain a conviction of the true state of the case by referring to the Tables annexed to the Report itself.

We dread the effects of the impression resulting from the First Report so long suffered to act on the minds of many already prejudiced on the subject; and we respectfully trust that His Majesty's Government will exert its influence in removing that impression, and in dissipating the illusions under which so many intelligent men view the agricultural question.

We have the honour to be, &c.

(signed) *Daniel de Lisle Brock.*
Thomas Le Breton.
J. Le Couteur.

Appendix, No. 8.

LETTER from *Daniel de Lisle Brock, Thomas Le Breton* and *J. Le Couteur*, Esquires, to *Henry Labouchere*, Esq. Chairman of the Committee on the Channel Islands, &c. &c. &c.

Sir, Colonnade Hotel, the 1st June 1835.

In addition to the papers now before the Select Committee, we have the honour to request their attention to a few general observations.

The situation of the Channel Islands relatively to this country is of a peculiar nature. They have been incorporated with England since the Normans first arrived, and were naturally admitted by their sovereigns to all the rights and immunities of their newly acquired dominions. It is not surprising if the islands were, from the establishment of this dynasty, favoured with distinctive privileges, if when the rest of Normandy was torn from the Anglo-Norman princes, the islands should have received from them and their successors new grants and confirmations of privileges, as a reward for their fidelity to those princes and their adherence to England. The engagement to be true and faithful to that cause was the condition attached to those privileges. The inhabitants, for seven centuries, have strictly and honourably fulfilled their part of the compact; exposed as they are, and those of Jersey in particular, to the greatest losses and hardships, they have made the most strenuous efforts to repel the numerous attempts of the enemy to conquer them; Jersey may indeed be said to be in the very jaws of France, from which she is only 15 miles distant, but the courage and devotion of her inhabitants to their sovereigns and to this country, although attended with the greatest sacrifices, have been crowned with success; in 11 instances, single-handed, they have proved victorious.

These facts are notorious; the manner and period of our connexion with England are important features in its history; our charters are extant, and none can be more strong in point of antiquity, repeated confirmations of the privilege we claim, and uninterrupted enjoyment.

To set these aside, to deprive of their undoubted rights communities so circumstanced, requires some occurrence of no ordinary character—some great abuse of the privilege on the one side, or some imperious necessity on the other. Neither exist. The First Report of the Commissioners of Customs did indeed convey matters of fact, and charges of fraud of so serious a nature that, if true, we should have been ready to admit the necessity of a legislative remedy. We have proved, and the Commissioners have been forced to acknowledge, that the facts stated in their First Report were erroneous, the charges of fraud against the islands unfounded. They admit, by their Second Report, that the annual average of corn grown in all the Channel Islands, and exported to Great Britain during the five years ending on the 5th January 1834, was only 2,237 quarters.

As to the quantity exported in the year ending in January 1835, (which exceeds that amount) the excess is chiefly owing to the very attempt to restrict the exportation; the report of an intention to that effect operated in creating a demand, in the same manner as a run is sometimes created on a bank for the immediate payment of its notes, by every holder being afraid of coming too late.

Now that the charge of fraud is abandoned, the quantity exported from the islands must appear too insignificant to create alarm; there is in reality no ground whatever for legislative interference. We must however be permitted to notice an objection that has been mentioned to us, as constituting a ground for that interference. It is objected to the islands that they consume more than they grow, and there can, therefore, be no necessity for the exercise of our privilege; and, moreover, that since we must replace the corn sent to England by foreign corn, it is tantamount to our sending there so much foreign corn. If it were now a matter of discussion, whether the privilege should be granted to us as a favour, a condition for restricting it, in this case, might be attached to the grant. But the right exists independently of any restriction; all settlements, all purchases of land have from time immemorial taken place on the faith of that right; and it cannot be thought unreasonable to ask that it may be enjoyed in future in the same manner as it has so long been enjoyed before. No inconvenience, no injury has arisen during the centuries during which it has been acted upon, and during which it has been repeatedly confirmed, as the price and reward of services rendered in return.

The islands have a right in the privilege in question, a right vested individually, as well as collectively. Every proprietor of land has a clear interest not opposed to, but distinct from that of the community at large; he is entitled to insist on the maintenance of the chartered rights, which are the protection of his individual property; what signifies it to him, if on the whole island taken collectively, there should be no surplus? he finds that after feeding his family a surplus remains, and he must naturally be desirous of sending it to the best market; for, if obliged to sell in the island, he must do so at a price much lower than the price of which the English agriculturists so much complain, at the price of foreign corn without the protection of corn laws.

The word privilege naturally conveys an idea of an advantage specially conferred on the parties to whom it is granted; the only parties now interested are the growers of the produce permitted to be sold in England; to deprive them of this permission, on the ground that the islands at large do not require it, would be the greatest injustice to the only parties meant to be benefited, parties who are more in want of a remunerating price than any agriculturists in England, for prices are considerably lower in the islands.

This view of individual rights, compared to those collectively enjoyed, is exactly conformable to the view taken by the land-owners themselves in Great Britain. It is from a regard to their individual interest that the duty on the importation of foreign wheat exceeds at this moment the price at which the very best wheat can be sold. Collectively the people disapprove of this duty; individually, for those interested in the land, it is thought a necessary protection; and considering agriculture to be the basis of the prosperity of this country, we consider it as just. The same justice that is claimed by the English agriculturists, the same protection that is required for them, we solicit may be, not granted, but continued to the agriculturists of the Channel Islands, as of right appertaining to them.

We have the honour to be, Sir, &c.

Daniel de Lisle Brock.
Thomas Le Breton.
J. Le Couteur.

Appendix, No. 9.

LETTER from *Daniel de Lisle Brock*, *Thomas Le Breton*, and *J. Le Couteur*, Esquires, to the Right hon. *H. Labouchere*, Chairman of the Committee, &c. &c.

Sir, Colonnade Hotel, 12th June 1835.

With reference to the investigation which has taken place before the Committee on the Channel Islands' Corn Trade, we beg leave to transmit to you a Statement of all Corn shipped for England at Jersey, from the 20th April last to the 4th instant, specifying the ports, amount of each shipment, name and tonnage of vessel, name of shipper, the names of the growers, of whom purchased, and the quantity purchased from each grower, which fully corroborates the evidence which we have given before the Committee.

We also take this opportunity of informing the Members of the Committee, that Mr. George Picot, an experienced farmer and landed proprietor, has been sent over by the States of Jersey with samples of wheat grown in the Island, both in bags and in sheaf, which last cannot by any possibility be foreign; this proves that Corn, such as that which was exhibited to the Committee, is commonly produced in the Island.

Should you think it necessary to examine this gentleman, he will attend the Committee for that purpose on Monday next.

We have, &c.

(signed) *Daniel de Lisle Brock.*
Thomas Le Breton.
J. Le Couteur.

A STATEMENT of all Corn shipped for *England*, from the 20th April last to the 4th instant, specifying the Ports, amount of each Shipment, Name and Tonnage of Vessel, Name of Shipper, the Names of the Growers of whom purchased, and the Quantity purchased from each Grower.

29th April, Plymouth: 73 Imperial Quarters Wheat, p' Gulnare, 43 tons; George Picot, shipper.

		Cabots.
John De La Perrelle	St. Mary	11½
Edward Hubert	St. Lawrence	20
Thomas Pinel	St. Saviour	59½
Ph. Le Bastard	St. Martin	33
John Bisson	St. John	8
John Valpy	Gronville	62
Julian Gatain	St. Ouen	32
Charles Blampied	Trinity	31
Ph. Manger	St. John	59
Ph. Gruchy	St. Clement	40
John De La Perrelle	St. Mary	1 ½
Aaron de St. Croix	St. Lawrence	12
Margaret Le Cras	St. John	12
Peter Cabot	Trinity	31
John Le Cornu	St. Lawrence	37
John Anley	St. John	24
Thomas De Faye	Gronville	12
John Le Rougetel	St. Clement	27
Charles Larbalestier	Trinity	19
Philip Duheaume	St. Peter	12
Philip Le Riche	Trinity	35½
John Bourgis	St. John	24
Thomas De Gruchy	Trinity	52
Noah Arthur	St. Lawrence	41
John Benet	St. Saviour	32
John Hocquard	St. John	48
David Le Riche	St. Lawrence	124
Joshua Alexandre	St. Saviour	42
Philip Payne	St. Lawrence	32
		986

22d April, Plymouth: 28½ Imperial Quarters Wheat, p' Guernsey Lily, 44 tons; George Aubin, shipper.

		Cabots.
George Aubin	Gronville, No. 1	108
John Desriaux	St. Mary	35
Philip De La Haye	St. Helier	36½
Peter Hamon	St. Lawrence	46
Edward Le Maistre	St. Saviour	72
Philip Rondel	St. Mary	40
Esther Gruchy	Trinity	32
John Le Quesne	St. Helier	38
		407½

Said Date and Port: 74 Quarters Wheat, p' said Vessel; John Le Bas, junior, shipper.

Moses Gibaut	St. John (2)	255
Thomas Baudains	St. Saviour	26¾
Edward De Caen	St. Peter	25
Philip Bichard	St. Peter	78
John Roulant	Trinity	27
Abraham Poingdestre	St. John	50
John Orange	St. Brelade	70
Tom Martin	St. Brelade	48
Philip Baudains	St. Peter	30
John Hamon	St. John	20½
George Picot	St. John	65½
Philip Vautier	St. Ouen	18
Isaac Falla	St. John	66
Richard Le Quesne	St. John	28½
David Mesley	St. John	32
John Anley	St. John	12
Simon Le Grand	St. Peter	50
Francis Binet	St. Peter	24
John Hamon	St. Lawrence	22
John Blampied	Trinity	50
		996¼

6th May, said Port: 47 *Quarters, Wheat, p' Gulnare; George Picot, shipper.*

		Cabots.
John Rondel	St. Lawrence	11½
James De Faye	Gronville	52
Elizabeth Renouf	Trinity	26
Joshua Le Quesne	St. John	30
John Barette	St. John	32
Margaret Le Cras	St. John	19
John Le Jeune, junior	St. Clement	40
Edward Renouf	St. Lawrence	25
John de St. Croix	St. Lawrence	52
Philip Gruchy		13
John Godel	St. John	20
John Crill	St. Lawrence	16
Elias Starck	St. Martin	20
John Ahier	St. Saviour	55
Philip Mourant	St. John	40
John De La Perrelle	St. Mary	7½
Thomas De Gruchy	Trinity	73
James Edward Amiraux	St. Clement (3.)	26
Peter Cabot	Trinity	19
Robert Brown	St. Helier	57
		639

8th May, said Port: 28½ *Quarters Wheat, p' Guernsey Lily; Francis Le Sueur, junior, shipper.*

George Picot	St. John	41
John Nicolle	St. Martin	50
John Corbel	St. John	39½
Richard De Caen	St. Mary	38½
John Vibert	St. Mary	24
Elizabeth Aubin	St. Saviour	24
Samuel Le Feuvre	St. Helier	32
Philip Ahier	St. Clement	40
Peter De Caen	St. Lawrence	51
Elias Neel	St. Saviour	50
		390

Said Date and Port: 54 *Quarters Wheat p' said Vessel; Elias de Gruchy, shipper.*

Philip Pallot	St. Martin	40
John Priaux	St. Brelade	26
Thomas Collins	St. Lawrence	30
John Arthur	St. Mary	54
Philip Payn	St. Martin	38
Ph. Pinel	St. John	32
John Malzard	St. Ouen	17
Edward Remon	St. Lawrence	82
John Collas	St. Mary	47
John Lucas	St. Ouen	36
John Luce	St. Ouen	15
Peter Le Maistre	St. Ouen	33
John Du Val	St. Ouen	13
Ph. Le Feuvre	St. Ouen	29
Amice Carrel	St. Brelade	40
Rev. Philip Payn	St. Ouen	24
Thomas Vautier	St. Ouen	40
John Le Brocq	St. Ouen	80
Susan Du Val	St. Peter	16
Edward Jandron	St. Lawrence	24
Philip Desiraux		34½
Philip Jean		15¾
		765¼

21st May, said Port: 44 *Quarters Wheat, p Guernsey Lily; Elias de Gruchy, shipper.*

		Cabots.
John Arthur, Esq.	St. Ouen	50
Charles Le Masurier	St. Lawrence	72
Francis Vautier	St. Ouen	40
Thomas Collins	St. Lawrance	28
Joshua Le Gros	St. Mary	20
Ph. Le Ruez	St. Ouen	60
Anne De La Perrelle	St. Mary	56
John Hacquoil	St. Mary	16
John Orange, jun.	St. Brelade	58
John Le Feuvre	St. Brelade	13
Philip Le Feuvre, jun.	St. Peter	60
Ph. Hacquoil	St. Ouen (4)	40
Thomas Vautier	St. Ouen	37
Edward Le Rossignol	St. Lawrence (5)	38
Edward Romeril	St. Lawrence	26½
		614½

Said date and Port: 28½ *Quarters Wheat, p' said Vessel; George Aubin, shipper.*

Elizabeth Amy	Gronville	41
Matthew Alexandre	St. Helier	31
John Mourant	St. Saviour	44
Philip Galluhan	St. Clement	15
Philip Romeril	St. John	20
Thomas Filleul	St. Helier	23½
Peter Nicolle	St. Peter	32
Peter Le Gresley	St. Ouen	40
John Renouf	St. Peter	24
Lot Maurice	St. Peter	26½
Francis Alexandre	St. Brelade	32
Philip Le Cornu	St. Ouen	48
John Du Tot	Gronville	48
		395

Said date and Port: 28 *Quarters Wheat, p' said Vessel; Francis Le Sueur, jun. shipper.*

John Mauger	St. John	60
Nicholas Arthur	St. Mary	38
John Mourant	St. Lawrence	37½
Francis Le Marquand	St. Helier	46
Elizabeth Aubin	St. Saviour	24
Philip Nicolle	Gronville	52
John Hocquard	Gronville	70½
Francis Fleury	St. Lawrence	30
George Quenault	St. Saviour	25
		383

29th May, said Port: 15½ *Quarters Wheat, p' Echo, 36 Tons; John Le Bas, jun. shipper.*

John Le Brocq	St. Helier	151
James Dumaresq	St. Peter	18
Philip Journeaux	St. Saviour	38½
		207½

4th June, said Port: 36 *Quarters Wheat, p Guernsey Lily; Elias de Gruchy, shipper.*

John Binet	St. Mary	12
Thomas Blampied	St. Peter	106
Ph. Simon	St. Peter	40
Nicholas Arthur	St. Mary	32
John Bosdet	St. Peter	95½
George De La Haye	St. Helier	16
John Gallachan	St. Saviour	79¾
James Le Brocq	St. Ouen	52
John Luce	St. Ouen	32
Philip Le Feuvre	St. Ouen	36
		501¼

N. B.—In each case of shipment, the exporter has passed a general declaration that the Wheat exported by him was the produce of this Island, being founded in such step by the individual declarations of the several parties whose names appear in this statement, as *bonâ fide* the produce of their own land, with the following exceptions:

No. 1 - - Produce of Tithes.
2 & 3 - - „ Seignorial Rents.
4, 5 & 6 - „ Parochial Rates, Trésors et Charités.

Customs Office, Jersey,
9th June 1835.

Wilders, Compt.
John Durell, P. Exp.

N. B.—The average weight of a cabot of Wheat is 30 pounds, the selling weight 32.

Committee Room for the Channel Islands Corn Inquiry,
15th June 1835.

Sir,

We have the honor to enclose a certificate as taken on the 9th April 1835, of a shipment of 237 imperial quarters of Corn from Guernsey to Plymouth, by which it will be seen that the certificates, on oath of 71 growers, had previously been taken, and were deposited with the Court by S. Drake Cox, the shipper, who himself swore that it was the same Corn as he had purchased of those 71 growers.

On the 16th May, Mr. Picot, a Jersey farmer now present, sold his Wheat at Plymouth at 44*s.* 6*d.* per imperial quarter; upon which sale the only profit was, the difference in the value of the currency between Jersey and England.

It can be proved that the average price of Wheat at Plymouth has been for the last five or six years higher than in the other parts of the kingdom; and as more than nine-tenths of the Island Corn has been sold there, there cannot be a stronger proof of the Island Corn having produced no effect on general prices, since it has produced none in the port where nearly the whole has been sent. We have &c.

(signed) *David de Lisle Brock.*
Thomas Le Breton.
J. Le Couteur.

Certificate of a Shipment of Corn from *Guernsey* to *Plymouth*.

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY.

In the "Happy Return" of Guernsey, *William Potten*, master, for Plymouth, six hundred and one quarters of Wheat, Guernsey measure, equal to about two hundred and thirty seven imperial quarters, as specified at the back [*foot*] of this certificate: the certificate passed by the growers of the said Wheat, according to the quantity affixed to each name, having been exhibited to the Court by the deponent, and left with the Court.

Mr. *S. D. Cox* maketh oath that the Wheat above-mentioned, are bonâ fide the growth and produce of this Island, Alderney and Sark only, and that no article of foreign growth or produce forms a component part thereof. *S. Drake Cox.*

Sworn before us at Guernsey the ninth day of April 1835.

John Guille, L. Bf. } Jurats of the
William Collings, } Royal Court.
J. W. Gosselin, }

A true Copy of the original, which is filed in this Office.

Custom House, Guernsey, 9th June 1835. } *John Pulling*. P. Off. *Jno. Radford*, Cont.

Particulars of the Wheat in the above Certificate.

Guernsey Measure	Qrs.	bsh.
Guillaumi Mauger	4	2
Nicholas Naftil	3	0
Jean De Moulpied	14	2
William Henry Gavit	11	0
Pierre Le Page	11	1
Pierre Hostevin	16	3
Abraham Domaille	6	0
Thomas Brouard	4	3
Nicholas Bisson	4	2
Pierre Allez	9	2
Jean Priauke	3	3
Thomas Brouard	3	0
George Corbin	6	0
Pierre Briauke	9	2
Nicholas De Moulpied	7	2
Jean Mauger	23	1
Thomas Sarre	1	0
Samuel Le Page	5	2
Andre Cohu	5	0
William Simon	7	0
John Langtris	2	0
George Rose	1	3
James Hubert	6	2
John Hardif	10	3
Pierre Le Page	7	2
Rachel Heaume	5	0
Charles de Garis	5	0
Mathew Tostevin	10	0
John Brouard	3	0
Thomas Hamon	4	0
Thomas Le Missurien	17	1
Jean de Garis	11	0
Daniel Mauger	8	2
Nicholas Mauger	5	1
Thomas Le Sauvage	5	0
Thomas Le Page	7	2
Hellur Mauger	16	3
Thomas Tostevin	13	0

Guernsey Measure	Qrs.	bsh.
John Blauche	5	2
John Ollivier	10	0
Pierre de Moulpied	1	0
Nicholas Brouard	4	2
Nicholas Rabey	2	2
J. De La Rue	5	0
Thomas Mauger	12	1
George Forode	12	0
Elizabeth Robilland	4	1
John Mauger	14	2
John Raugien	7	2
William De Carterit	4	1
John Fallaise	18	1
Thomas Mauger	9	2
Thomas Priaule	2	0
Jean Trachy	3	3
Thomas De Moulpied	8	0
Leonard Tostevin	9	2
Michal Martel	23	0
Thomas Vaudin, 120 Cabots	20	0
Jean Martin	5	1
Jean Martin	6	0
Jean Martin	8	2
Phillip Guille	7	0
Pierre Priauke	9	3
Imp. Meas.		
James Mahy 9 4 } equal to	45	2
James Mahy 8 5 }		
Phillip De Carteret, 29 Cabots	4	3
Jean Trachy	3	0
Jean Tostevin	10	0
Samuel Le Page	4	3
Frederick Le Gresley	7	0
Andre Cohu	15	1
Guernsey Quarters	601	0

Equal to about five hundred and thirty seven imperial quarters.

REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

CHANNEL ISLANDS (CORN TRADE);

TOGETHER WITH THE

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

AND AN APPENDIX.

Ordered by The House of Commons, *to be Printed*,
17 *June* 1835.

289.

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REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

MR. GOLDSWORTHY GURNEY'S CASE;

WITH

THE MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,*
10 *July* 1835.

Jovis, 14° die Maii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the Case of Mr. Goldsworthy Gurney:—

And a Committee was appointed of,—

Mr. Cayley.	Mr. Benett.
Sir William Molesworth.	Sir Henry Hardinge.
Mr. Jephson.	Mr. Blamire.
Mr. Thornhill Baring.	Mr. Wallace.
Mr. Robert Gordon.	Sir William Trelawney.
The Earl of Darlington.	Mr. Charles Buller.
Lord Viscount Sandon.	Mr. Hallyburton.
Mr. Pemberton.	Mr. Harland.
Sir Charles Lemon.	The Earl of Euston.
Mr. Miles.	Mr. Rundle.
Mr. Handley.	Mr. George Frederick Young.
Mr. Hall Dare.	Mr. Wakley.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers and Records.

Ordered, THAT Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Veneris, 12° die Junii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT Mr. Pendarves be added to the Committee.

Veneris, 10° die Julii, 1835.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to report their Opinion, together with the Minutes of the Evidence taken before them.

THE REPORT - - - - - - - - - - - - p. 3

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE - - - - - - - - - p. 19

REPORT

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into the Case of Mr. *Goldsworthy Gurney*, and who were empowered to report their Opinion thereupon, together with the MINUTES of the EVIDENCE taken before them;——HAVE, pursuant to the Order of The House, examined the Matters to them referred, and have agreed to the following REPORT.

YOUR Committee proceeded, in the first instance, to inquire into the origin and subsequent progress of Carriages propelled by Steam to run on Common Roads. They called before them the first scientific and engineering authorities, especially those who had paid attention to the subject of Steam Carriages; and the result of their examination of Evidence of this nature was an unanimous opinion, that notwithstanding various attempts made by Mr. Watt, Mr. Trevithick, and others, that there was no one to dispute the claim of Mr. Goldsworthy Gurney to the merit of having been the first person to apply Steam Carriages successfully to Common Roads.

The history of the advance, and the obstructions in the way, of this discovery, appear from the Evidence to be shortly these:

Mr. Gurney took out a Patent for his Steam Carriage in 1825.

His next step was experimenting, to the end that he might be able to adapt his invention to practical purposes; in the course of which he found that he had certain obstacles to remove, such as an undue proportion of noise, smoke, &c. &c.

In 1826-27 Mr. Gurney took out a Second Patent for the mode in which he proposed to overcome these practical difficulties.

In 1829, Mr. Gurney, after much pains, practical experiment and expense, conceiving that his Steam Carriage was reduced to safety and practice, undertook a journey from London to Melksham (within 13 miles of Bath) and back, a distance altogether of nearly 200 miles, which he accomplished without an accident, except the breaking of an iron in the wheel. The travelling on the return journey was at the rate of 12 miles per hour. Sir Charles Dance, Mr. Hanning and Mr. Bulnois, three subsequent contractors with Mr. Gurney for a licence to run his carriage on certain lines of road, were of the number accompanying him on this occasion.

In 1830, Sir Charles Dance entered into a contract with Mr. Gurney for a licence to run his carriage from London to Holyhead, and from Birmingham to Bristol, through Cheltenham and Gloucester.

The same year Mr. Hanning (since dead) contracted for the Great Western Roads.

In 1831, Sir Charles Dance ran experimentally and successfully from Gloucester to Cheltenham (nine miles) three times a day without accident (except some breakages in consequence of heaps of stones laid there for the purpose, and which would have broken any other coach, and did stop

the mail and other carriages,) for four months in succession, having carried upwards of 4,000 persons at one half of the fare of common four-horse coaches, and with a profit. Three months after the commencement of the above experiment by Sir Charles Dance, he discovered that there was a disposition arising in Parliament to impose prohibitory tolls on the lines of road which had been contracted for with Mr. Gurney. In one instance, on the Pucklechurch road (near Bristol), the toll amounted to eight guineas each time of passing. Upwards of 50 private Bills (*see* Appendix to Report of 1831), with this object, had passed the Legislature, and others were passing, all in effect prohibitions. In consequence of the imposition of these tolls, Sir Charles Dance suspended his operations, awaiting the result of a Petition presented from Mr. Gurney to The House of Commons, immediately on his becoming acquainted with this apparent sanction of the Legislature to the principle of prohibition against his Carriage.

This was in 1831. A Select Committee was at once appointed to investigate the subject; it examined Evidence of the first authority, and presented an elaborate Report to The House, of which the following is the conclusion:

" Sufficient evidence has been adduced to convince your Committee, 1, that carriages can be propelled by Steam on common roads at an average rate of 10 miles per hour; 2, that at this rate they have conveyed upwards of 14 passengers; 3, that their weight, including engine, fuel, water, and attendants, may be under three tons; 4, that they can ascend and descend hills of considerable inclination with facility and safety; 5, that they are perfectly safe for passengers; 6, that they are not (or need not be, if properly constructed) nuisances to the public; 7, that they will become a speedier and cheaper mode of conveyance than carriages drawn by horses; 8, that, as they admit of greater breadth of tire than other carriages, and as the roads are not acted on so injuriously as by the feet of horses in common draught, such carriages will cause less wear of roads than coaches drawn by horses; 9, that rates of toll have been imposed on steam carriages, which would prohibit their being used on several lines of road, were such charges permitted to remain unaltered."

The Committee of 1831, in another part of their Report, state, that

" These inquiries have led the Committee to believe that the substitution of inanimate for animal power, in draught on common roads, is one of the most important improvements in the means of internal communication ever introduced. Its practicability they consider to have been fully established; its general adoption will take place more or less rapidly, in proportion as the attention of scientific men shall be drawn by public encouragement to further improvement.

" The Committee are convinced, that the real merits of this invention are such, that it may be safely left to contend with the ordinary difficulties incident to new discoveries; there are others, however, from which the Legislature can alone relieve it. Tolls, to an amount which would utterly prohibit the introduction of steam carriages, have been imposed on some roads; on others, the trustees have adopted modes of apportioning the charge which would be found, if not absolutely prohibitory, at least to place such carriages in a very unfair position as compared with ordinary coaches.

" Two causes may be assigned for the imposition of such excessive tolls upon steam carriages. The first, a determination on the part of the trustees to obstruct, as much as possible, the use of steam as a propelling power; the second, and probably the more frequent, has been a misapprehension of their weight and effect on roads. Either cause appears to the Committee a sufficient justification for their recommending to The House, that legislative protection should be extended to steam carriages, with the least possible delay."

The Report of 1831 continues,

" Mr. Gurney has given the following specimens of the oppressive rates of tolls adopted in several of these Acts: On the Liverpool and Prescot road, Mr. Gurney's carriage

carriage would be charged 2 *l.* 8 *s.*, while a loaded stage coach would pay only 4 *s.* On the Bathgate road the same carriage would be charged 1 *l.* 7 *s.* 1 *d.*, while a coach drawn by four horses would pay 5 *s.* On the Ashburnham and Totness road Mr. Gurney would have to pay 2 *l.*, while a coach drawn by four horses would be charged only 3 *s.* On the Teignmouth and Dawlish roads the proportion is 12 *s.* to 2 *s.*"

In 1832, in consequence of the above Report, and at the recommendation of the Committee of 1831, a Bill was introduced into The House of Commons, to remove the prohibitory tolls on Steam Carriages. This Bill passed The House of Commons, but was thrown out in the House of Lords, in consequence, it was understood, of some idea that Steam Carriages would be prejudicial to the agricultural interest, or to turnpike trusts.

In 1834, Mr. Gurney presented a Petition to The House of Commons, stating the extreme hardship of his case. A Select Committee was appointed to consider the matter, but it concluded its sitting so late in the last Session of the last Parliament, that it merely recommended the appointment of another Committee in the next Session, to prosecute the consideration of the subject: In virtue of which recommendation, Your Committee have been now sitting.

From the Evidence given before the Committees of 1831, 1834, and the present Session, it would appear (resuming the history of the progress of the Steam Carriage) that Mr. Gurney, who had, in anxious suspense, kept open his manufactory, at a great cost, until the throwing out of the Toll Relief Bill by the House of Lords, then closed it in despair, selling his materials at a great loss.

Sir Charles Dance also, finding that one branch of the Legislature persisted in its discouragement of the invention, notwithstanding the recommendation and example of the other, discontinued his experiments at the moment of their successful completion, and threw up his contract.

A letter from Sir Charles Dance to Mr. Gurney, at this juncture, after stating the value attached by him to the invention, shows the cause of his forsaking it. The following is an extract.

"I learned that a vast number of turnpike bills had passed, and that more were passing through both Houses of Parliament, granting tolls upon steam carriages, which would be a complete prohibition; and that the Cheltenham trust was one of the number. Feeling that we were thus likely to be defeated by Acts of the Legislature, in addition to the other difficulties (viz. local opposition), I relinquished the intention of continuing to run the carriages and set off to London, where I arrived in time to consult and agree to your petitioning Parliament, which led to the settlement of the Committee of the House of Commons."

In the course of the last week also, Mr. Gurney received a communication from Sir C. Dance, confirmatory of his previous letter, repeating his unshaken confidence in the success of Steam Carriages on Common Roads, and acknowledging that the imposition of prohibitory tolls by the Legislature had been the cause of his being driven from the prosecution of the subject. It should be stated, that it was the wish of the Committee of 1834 to summon Sir Charles Dance before them, but that he was at that time travelling on the Continent.

The effect produced on the minds of the other contractors before mentioned, viz. Mr. Hanning and Mr. Bulnois, was similar to that produced on Sir C. Dance. The Committee also expressed a wish to call up

Mr. Hanning, but he was unfortunately dead. They obtained, however, sufficient proof from Mr. David Dady and others, that eight Carriages (three of which were nearly finished, five others laid,) were counter-ordered by Mr. Hanning, in consequence of the imposition of these tolls; he having immediately before expressed his thorough conviction of the success of the invention. This statement was subsequently confirmed by Mr. Portal, solicitor, of Clifford's Inn, and by a letter from Mr. Hanning to Mr. Gurney.

Mr. William Bulnois, who had entered into a contract for the Brighton and Worthing, and London, Southampton and Portsmouth roads, was examined by Your Committee. He is asked--

"464. Then it is your decided opinion that the improvement was stopped by those tolls?—Yes; that was one of the great causes, I may say the great cause, with Sir Charles Dance; the whole thing seemed at the time to be abandoned; all the parties concerned seemed to be at fault; they did not know what else they were to do.

"482. You abandoned the speculation because Sir Charles Dance abandoned his road?—I may say so, because the whole thing seemed to subside."

The nature of these contracts were for the most part a trifling premium at the commencement. Mr. Gurney was to have his profit in the manufacture of the Carriages, and a mileage duty of from 2*d.* to 6*d.* per mile.

But the most direct loss which Mr. Gurney experienced from the non-fulfilment of contracts was in the case of Mr. Ward. Mr. Ward had contracted in 1826 for a licence to run the Carriage on the London and Liverpool roads. This was in the infancy of the invention, and Mr. Ward proposed to await the result of the experiments and improvements making by Mr. Gurney before he commenced running. He watched the experiments, and became satisfied of the practicability. He was to pay a mileage duty of 4½ *d.* per mile.

Nothing can better substantiate Mr. Ward's good opinion of the Carriage than the fact, that in 1831, during the successful journeys daily made by Sir C. Dance, between Cheltenham and Gloucester, he contracted with Mr. Gurney to purchase his Scotch Patent out and out. For this he was to give 15,000*l.* (5,000*l.* to be paid within two months of the date of the contract.) He was also to give 2,000*l.* additional, in consideration of the extended licence granted him to run from Liverpool to Edinburgh; thus connecting the whole line from London to Edinburgh. The imposition of the prohibitory tolls by the Legislature, before referred to, caused him also to throw up his contract within three weeks of its commencement.

Your Committee summoned Mr. Ward before them, and nothing could be more explicit and distinct than the evidence he gave with respect to the contract, and the effect of the tolls upon it. After stating the fact of the contract for the purchase of the Scotch Patent, Mr. Ward was asked—

"608. You considered the invention as perfect?—I considered it as perfect.

"609. What were the terms of the purchase of the Scotch patent?—I was to have paid 15,000*l.*, in 5,000*l.* instalments.

"610. You were to have paid Mr. Gurney 15,000*l.*?—Yes.

"611. Was that contract extended afterwards to Liverpool, to join your line of road?—Yes, it was; that was made subsequently at Edinburgh. I was much inclined to follow up my London and Liverpool line to Edinburgh, and I therefore offered Mr. Gurney an extra 2,000*l.* if he would allow me to have that road included

included in my Scotch patent; that is to say, if I gave him 17,000 *l.*, that he would throw in the Liverpool and Edinburgh roads.

" 612. Were the terms of that contract ever fulfilled?—No, they were not.

" 613. Was the sum of 17,000 *l.*, or any part of it, ever paid by you to Mr. Gurney?—No; I was to pay 5,000 *l.* in the course of two months after the period that I entered into the agreement.

" 614. Did you ever pay any part of that?—No.

" 615. Will you explain the reason why you did not pay it?—I did not pay that 5,000 *l.*, because of the heavy tolls being put on, which amounted in my opinion to a prohibition.

" 616. Upon which of the roads included in your contract were large tolls imposed?—There were as many as seven, eight or nine roads upon my own particular line.

" 617. Can you name them?—Tolls were imposed on the Prescot-road; there was one on the Coventry, which I must pass through in my contract with Mr. Gurney; the St. Alban's was another which I passed through; there was one in particular interfered with me which was between Edinburgh and Glasgow, which was the Bathgate toll; there was one near to London, the Highgate Trust; I do not recollect any other at this moment. They affected me too sensibly on those lines of road, to think of paying a sum of 5,000 *l.* I am not sure whether it was six or seven at this period.

" 618. The roads that you have mentioned are all that you remember at the present moment?—I cannot remember any other just now.

" 619. Do you think there may be others in addition to those?—The impression upon my mind was, that there were as many as eight or nine, but I do not know how many I have enumerated.

" 620. Have you ever ascertained whether those Bills that passed The House of Commons passed the House of Lords?—I did not; it was useless following the subject at this period, as I knew they had passed the Commons.

" 621. Were you sanguine up to that period of the success of those carriages, as to the capability?—Decidedly, and I am at this moment.

" 622. You have stated that about the year 1826, which was the period of your first contract, you were not sufficiently aware of the success of those carriages?—I had a very strong idea that they would succeed; I had certainly no proof beyond what I had in my own breast, from having seen the experiment that Mr. Gurney made upon the carriage which he exhibited to me before I paid the first money.

" 623. When did your doubts begin to give way upon the subject?—I never had a doubt.

" 624. Previously to your entering into a contract for the Scotch patent, you must have become more convinced of the success of those carriages?—Every day, decidedly.

" 625. What led you to assure yourself of success?—By experiments tha Mr. Gurney made upon the carriages; he built several carriages before he built Sir Charles Dance's.

" 626. Were you a witness of any of those experiments?—Yes, I was.

" 627. Were you convinced they would succeed?—I was quite satisfied in my own mind.

" 628. And that there would be profit attending the use of them?—A very large one, I considered.

" 632. Can you assign any other reason for not fulfilling your contract, than the tolls which The House of Commons were gradually and generally imposing upon private trusts?—My reason for giving it up was, the fear that the tolls would not stop there, but that they would be extended to become a prohibition to the invention.

" 638. Did the imposition of those tolls upon those roads, and not upon all, create upon your mind an impression that they might be imposed upon those roads on which they had not already been imposed?—Decidedly; in fact I had heard that the Government were determined to put a stop to this invention.

" 639. And this interference of Parliament was the main ground, if not the sole ground, of your not fulfilling your contract with Mr. Gurney?—Yes, decidedly.

" Had you at all contemplated the number of carriages that would have been requisite for the road?—I contemplated running as many as from 12 to 20 from London to Liverpool.

" 643. And how many from Liverpool to Edinburgh, and in Scotland?—In Scotland, I contemplated running six immediately upon the great road between Edinburgh and Glasgow; I did not go into calculation beyond that, because I saw that there was a sufficient profit on the whole. It was not my intention to become the contracting manager of these coaches; my object was to sell out and out the patent right; for I had a party who would have given me a very large sum of money for what I was buying for 17,000 *l.*

" 644. Did you enter into a contract with those other parties?—I did not enter into a written contract; but this party was pledged to me by the most respectable house in Edinburgh.

" 645. Will you have any objection to state the amount of that?—I can have no hesitation to state at this period I was to have received 32,000 *l.* for the patent right in Scotland, by instalments.

" 646. Were the negotiations pending at the time of these tolls being imposed?—Yes, they were; I directed my agent to write about them.

" 647. Were those negotiations broken off in consequence of the tolls being imposed?—I refused to comply with the payment of the first instalment.

" 648. Were the persons with whom you negotiated anxious for the completion of the negotiation?—They were anxious; they would have fulfilled it, if I had pressed it; but I could not think of pressing it when I did not see profit arising myself; in fact, I could not have taken upon myself to have paid Mr. Gurney the 5,000 *l.*, when I was impressed with the idea that I should have gained no profit.

" 649. Were the parties with whom you negotiated scientific men, or men competent to judge of the nature and success of those steam carriages?—One or two of them were engineers themselves; they were perfectly convinced of the efficacy and practicability of the engines.

" 650. And they had seen no reason up to that time to doubt of the success of the experiment?—No, nor do I think that they have up to this period.

" 651. You have stated that from 12 to 20 carriages would have been required in the first instance to run from London to Liverpool, that six would have been required to run from Edinburgh to Glasgow, in addition to other parts of Scotland?—Yes, there were many other roads.

" 652. Suppose the whole amount of carriages to have been 30, what do you suppose would have been Mr. Gurney's profit upon that?—It would depend very much upon the mileage that he fixed upon; we were anxious that he should put a low mileage duty upon it. The impression upon my mind is, that it would have been a very large fortune to Mr. Gurney if he had fixed two pence per mile.

" 653. And there were to be 30 carriages, and those carriages run 100 miles a day?—One hundred and eighty-six, in one instance.

" 654. Suppose 30 carriages run 100 miles a day, at 6 *d.* a mile, what would have been the amount of Mr. Gurney's profit in one year?—I made a calculation at the time, and it would have been a very large amount, 27,360 *l.*

" 655. How many years had Mr. Gurney's Scotch patent to run?—I think about seven years.

" 656. Then Mr. Gurney might reasonably have expected from that contract with you, for those lines of road, this amount that you have there specified as the whole year's profit on 30 carriages?—Yes, I certainly think so; I should think, now I bring to my recollection my first calculation, when I first entered into the agreement, and when I obtained his licence, my profit would have been 50,000 *l.* on the Liverpool and Manchester alone.

" 657. Had you been at all connected in coach business in any way before?—Never.

" 658. Besides the 17,000 *l.*, which you had contracted to give Mr. Gurney for the purchase of his patent in Scotland and elsewhere, he might have expected for 30 carriages that ran upon this road, 189,000 *l.*?—Yes, if he continued to charge that mileage.

" 659. What

" 659. What was the mileage that Mr. Gurney charged in the first instance?—In my agreement it was put at 6*d.* per mile, but I was to have a re-abatement of 25 per cent.; there was a provision in that agreement which went to this effect; that if he at any time lowered that mileage, I was to have an abatement of 25 per cent.; that is, if he let to any other person at 2*d.* per mile, I was to have it at 1 ½ *d.*, which re-abatement I consider almost a fortune to myself if the thing had gone on.

" 660. Do you think that 2*d.* a mile would have been a high charge?—I do think it would have been rather high.

" 661. It was very low compared with the previous charge of 6*d.*?—Yes, it is certainly; but I considered at that time, and I consider up to this period, that it would have been policy for Mr. Gurney if he had reduced it.

" 662. That he would have made more profit by doing so?—Yes, it would be a greater inducement to people to have embarked in it.

" 668. What amount of tolls were laid upon the steam carriages running upon the roads which you have described as being affected by your contract?—The Highgate, Whetstone, St. Alban's and Coventry tolls amounted to 5*s.* each, for my two carriages, this would have been at the rate of nearly 1*s.* per mile, taking the length of each trust; and as I contemplated running small posting tugs, it must have been a prohibition. On the Edinburgh line, the Liverpool and Prescot was 12*s.* each time of passing. The Liverpool and Prescot was charged on the horse power, and would amount to 2*l.* 8*s.* each time of passing. The Bathgate road, between Glasgow and Edinburgh, in the bill which I saw, amounted, I think, to 1*l.* 7*s.* each time of passing. The toll is not carried out in the Appendix, now in my hands, to steam carriages with four wheels, which mine must have had."

In reference to this contract with Mr. Ward, Mr. Gurney is examined:

" 66. Between your contract and the expiration of two months, the imposition of tolls in Parliament became so rapid as to prevent Mr. Ward going on with his contract?—Yes.

" 67. Did this imposition of tolls occur exactly at the interval between the completing of your contract with Mr. Ward in June, and the expiration of the two months, when you were to receive your first instalment of 5,000*l.*?—Yes.

" 68. If that be so, how does it happen that Mr. Ward never fulfilled the terms of his contract?—As the question is asked him, I refer to his own answer before the last Committee. '*Q.* 615. Will you explain the reason why you did not pay it?—I did not pay that 5,000*l.* because of the heavy tolls being put on, which amounted, in my opinion, to a prohibition.'

" 69. Had you no means of compelling him to the fulfilling of the contract?—I could not have compelled him without going into the Court of Chancery.

" 70. Why?—I consulted my solicitor upon the subject; he said an action could not be brought except in the Court of Chancery; and as it was always understood between the parties and contractors, that if Government interfered so as to prohibit the subject by tolls or excessive duty, no proceedings should be taken to enforce dead loss upon them.

" 71. There were witnesses to such an understanding?—Yes.

" 72. Did you contemplate the imposition of those tolls?—Yes, and all the patentees and contractors. Here are some letters of Mr. Hanning's which refer to the subject so far back as 1829. We had always a dread of the imposition, not directly, of tolls, but we thought it likely the agricultural interest would become alarmed and frightened at a subject of this kind. We expected that, like all other great subjects, great opposition would be made to its practical introduction, and perhaps the Legislature would cause us to pause before it would suffer us to go on; this was a continual argument with us, and we constantly had conversations and meetings upon the subject.

" 73. Was there a general understanding in case any new difficulty arose, that your contract was to be modified or avoided?—There was this understanding. I wrote to Mr. Hanning, who had the great western contracts, the suspicion that was entertained by some of an interference on the part of the Legislature. In one of his letters, dated the 18th August 1829, he says, 'To suppose' (he was of a different opinion) 'that the Minister would for a moment think of crippling the energies

of the engine is most improbable; the advocates of such a measure might as well petition against steam power on land, because it lessens manual labour, and against its use on the sea, because we are now most powerful there under the use of canvass.' This passage shows that we feared the interference of the Legislature, and made our contracts not knowing in which way; but when we found that a number of Acts were passing imposing prohibitory tolls, it came like a thunderbolt, and struck us with the greatest alarm, as stated in the evidence of last session.

" 74. Mr. Hanning himself was a great agriculturist?—Yes; not only so, but a man of very large fortune, a spirited man, who took immense interest in inland transport. In connexion with his friend Lord Heathfield, he made a new road from London to Exeter, and established an admirable line of coaches on it.

" 75. Are there any witnesses alive that can bear testimony to this understanding between you and Mr. Ward, that if any Parliamentary interference was to take place that the contract was to be avoided?—Yes.

" 76. Is your solicitor alive?—Yes.

" 77. What is his name?—Mr. Portal, Clifford's Inn.

" 78. Was Mr. Ward ever applied to to fulfil the terms of the contract by you?—Not legally; I personally applied to him to fulfil the contract; his answer was, he could not fulfil it under the circumstances."

Mr. Portal was subsequently examined, and confirmed this understanding.

In consequence of the imposition of the tolls causing the non-fulfilment of these contracts, Mr. Gurney states, and he is corroborated by other evidence, that a sort of panic rapidly spread with respect to his invention, which for a time it would have been impossible to overcome. The public in general, not being cognizant of the fact of the imposition of the tolls, and judging merely from the suspension of the carriage running, was led to conclude its complete failure. And this opinion was naturally confirmed by other persons erecting Steam Carriages to run on common Roads, and by their experiments resulting from time to time in accident or failure. Mr. Gurney goes on to state, that having expended all his capital on the experiments, and having been disappointed of the sums he was to have received from the contractors under his Patent, he was unable from want of means (even if capitalists, in such a temper of the Legislature, would have ventured to contract) to prosecute his object. He was compelled to sell his materials at a great loss, and to dismiss his workmen. And one serious ground of complaint which Mr. Gurney makes is, that these workmen, whom an act of the Legislature compelled him to dismiss, have gone into the service of others, who have taken advantage of his necessities, and reaped the benefit of his experience and trouble in all the practical parts of the machinery. The reason given by the scientific witnesses why other Steam Carriages do not succeed is, that the main source of the safety and practicability of Mr. Gurney's Carriage depends on two principles, for the means of applying which he has the Patent-right; viz. separation and circulation. It appears that other Carriages have some separation and others circulation, but that the invasion of the Patent depends on using his means of effecting them conjointly; and that the ill success of such Carriages is caused by the absence of the two in conjunction, or by defective attempts at substitution. Dr. Lardner was examined by the Committee, and the following is in reference to this part of the subject:

" 889. Are you of opinion that circulation is essential to a boiler of that kind?—Quite essential; indeed all attempt it more or less. It is indispensable.

" 890. Do you consider Mr. Gurney to have been the first person who devised that plan?—I do, in its application in this way; tubular boilers are not new, but this form of tubular boiler and its application are entirely new.

" 891. The

"891. The practical result of that is, that the water is kept in contact with the tubes by that process?—Yes.

"892. Will you explain to the Committee what you mean by a separator?—In ordinary boilers the same vessel is a receptacle for the water and the steam, the water occupying the lower and the steam the upper part of the boiler. The state of ebullition in which the water is usually maintained is such, that the water is dashed up among the steam in the upper part of the boiler, and much of it remains suspended in the steam in a minute state of mechanical subdivision. It is found necessary in large boilers to leave a considerable height between the surface of the water and the roof of the boiler, in order that this spray may subside without passing through the steam tubes into the cylinder; this spray is what engineers call *priming*; and as it has no elasticity, it is mere waste of heat, besides other injurious consequences, if it be allowed to pass through the cylinder. The separator is a contrivance invented by Mr. Gurney, and is a steam chamber distinct and separate from the boiler; its object is to effect the separation of the priming from the steam before the latter is allowed to pass into the working cylinder. I have seen perfectly dry steam rush from the steam-pipe of the engine, and this would not be the case if the separation were not complete.

"893. Then you consider the separator that separates the water from the steam, to be a material part of any boiler that is to be applied for the purpose of running steam carriages on common roads?—Perhaps not of all boilers; the steam chamber may be so great that the water will separate itself, as it does in a large steam engine, but in a small boiler of this kind, I think it a very material appendage.

"894. And none but small boilers can be applied for the purpose of those steam carriages?—I think not; I have seen boilers of considerable size applied, but not with advantage."

In another place he is asked,

"899. Can you at all account for this steam carriage, which has now been invented for some years, not having come into practical operation sooner?—I think it arises, in some degree, from the distrust of capitalists in its success, but much more from its being notorious that, in cases where those carriages have been established, prohibitory tolls have been laid upon the roads, so as to render it impossible to run them; and although prohibitory tolls are not laid upon all roads, there does exist this idea, that the moment a steam carriage is built and placed on a road, the projectors are liable to be stopped immediately by a prohibitory Bill being passed.

"900. Do you think that cause sufficient to create a distrust in the minds of the capitalists?—I do, certainly.

"907. Is it your opinion that Mr. Gurney's carriage can be run with safety to the public?—I think it can, when constructed with proper proportions and proper strength.

"908. By following out his principles?—Yes, decidedly."

But notwithstanding the protection which Mr. Gurney's Patent affords to his method of circulation and separation, it is stated in evidence that human ingenuity might perhaps resort to expedients which, through some elaborate process, would render the specified means less necessary. These expedients would possibly not have been attempted, if Mr. Gurney's Carriage had not been interfered with by the prohibitory tolls; and he feels, that in consequence of the advantage given to other experimentalists during his necessary suspension of his object; in consequence of the prejudice excited in the public mind, as well by that suspension, as by the ill-digested attempts of others to supplant him during that suspension, he feels that, even if he had capital to proceed with, and the tolls were removed, that the prejudices of the public could not be so far overcome within the now limited term of his Patent, as to promise him any material advantage from the prosecution of his invention. He feels, and it appears to Your Committee with justice, that whatever Parliament might now be disposed to do for his encouragement, it could not place him in so advantageous a

position as he enjoyed at the moment the Legislature interfered with him, especially from the precedence his Patent would then have given him as a manufacturer; and also under the circumstance of railroads having been established or begun on most of the great lines of road, since the period of the suspension, which of course detracts much from the value of the Patent; one of its chief recommendations in a pecuniary point of view being, the priority it had over railways generally, and the probability that existed of its superseding in a great measure the necessity for them.

In reference to his outlay, Mr. Gurney was asked,

" 41. Will you give a general statement of your expenditure and your losses in pursuing the subject of steam carriages?—The direct and indirect losses are as follows:

Direct Loss of MONEY paid out of Pocket:

Paid six years' rent and taxes, at 1,000*l.* per annum	£. 6,000
Paid for four patents and specifications	1,200
Paid wages	15,000
Loss by forced sale on tools, lathes and fittings-up of manufactory	6,000
Paid for materials, over and above that accounted for the loss in forced sale	8,000
Direct Loss	£. 36,200
Received from sale of patents, contracts, &c.	20,000
Money paid out of pocket from private funds, over and above what had been received from others	£. 16,200

Indirect Loss:

Sale of the Scotch patent and contract for road from Edinburgh to Liverpool	£. 17,000
Loss by precedence of railways for five years, from fair expected mileage duty on those great roads	15,000
By fair expected mileage duty from contracts entered into	50,000
By fair expected mileage duty on the remaining great roads	150,000
	£. 232,000

Also loss by 10 years' sacrifice of my profession.
I paid 36,000*l.* during the six years the manufactory was at work.

" 42. For what?—For wages, materials, rent, clerks' salaries, &c. I paid for materials (not reckoned in the losses of the forced sale) 8,000*l.*; this is borne out by the evidence of Mr. Dady, who took it from his books, and from the accounts he kept at the manufactory.

" 43. Can you refer to the evidence of Mr. Dady on that point?—Mr. Dady was called up, as many of the other witnesses were, before the last Committee very suddenly. The first day, he said he had not seen the books for two years, and could not charge his memory; he is therefore called up again the next day, after he had seen and examined the books, and referred to the accounts he kept, and he is asked, para. 755, 'Are you acquainted at all with the weekly expenses of Mr. Gurney's manufactory? *A.* Yes.—*Q.* During what period? *A.* From the year 1825 to the spring of 1832.—*Q.* What were the weekly expenses during that time? *A.* They were sometimes more than others; some weeks, at the highest, they were 100*l.*, and sometimes they were down as low as between 30*l.* or 40*l.*' Now, taking the average therefore at 50*l.* only per week, which is a low average, for six years it will amount to 15,000*l.* He says, para. 759, when asked, 'Can you at all speak as to the total amount of your weekly expenses during those years? *A.* I think the sum total was about, from a rough calculation that I made at the end of the year 1830, 16,000*l.* or 17,000*l.*' This agrees with the previous estimate taken weekly. There is a direct loss also in the payment for the patents

patents and specification; I paid 1,200 *l.* for patents, specifications and drawings connected with steam carriages. Now the whole sum expended amounts to 36,000 *l.* out of pocket.

" 44. Has your expenditure in pursuing the subject, and your loss in consequence, arisen from your having been obliged to give it up by forced sales?—Yes, the direct loss.

" 45. You reckon expenses under the total of direct loss?—Yes.

" 46. Part of this is the payment of wages and payment of rent?—Part is the payment of wages, part payment of rent, and part for materials.

" 47. Have all those wages and all those rents been paid by you?—Yes, every farthing. Every account has been paid connected with the manufactory up to 40 *l.*, which is a disputed account; but up to this, the whole of the materials and the rent has been paid.

" 48. You estimate your expenses and direct loss at 36,000 *l.*?—That is the amount of money I have expended. But I should state that I have received from the sale of my patents, which nevertheless is *bonâ fide* my own property, as much so as any private property, contracts for roads, &c., that I have received 20,000 *l.*; therefore if that sum be deducted from 36,000 *l.*, the money expended, it leaves 16,000 *l.* dead loss out of my pocket; and which I find, on looking over my accounts, is the sum of money that has been advanced by me from my private sources and money advanced by my friends, independently of the sales of my patent and contracts.

" 49. What do you mean by money advanced by myself and friends; is it not a direct loss of your own, or is it shared by others?—It is a direct loss of my own.

" 50. What do you mean by the term your friends?—I advanced myself, from my own private resources, about 10,000 *l.*; there was 6,000 *l.* advanced to me by my friends at the time on my account.

" 51. You are liable to be called upon by your friends for the 6,000 *l.* now?—Those accounts have since been arranged.

" 52. You conceive 16,000 *l.* to be the balance of your direct loss?—My own personal loss in the manufactory, in which the patentees connected with the patent were not interested."

In addition to the difficulty existing in 1831 in the way of tolls, and which caused the suspension of Mr. Gurney's operations, Your Committee find that 150 Turnpike Acts have passed since that period, containing similar prohibitory clauses with respect to Steam Carriages, making in the whole upwards of 200.

Under the conviction that the prohibitory tolls imposed by Parliament in 1831, have been the cause of almost incalculable loss to Mr. Gurney, a loss in no degree exaggerated by him in his Petition to The House last Session, Your Committee conceive that it would be impossible, in common justice, for the Legislature to do less than to take steps to repeal such portions of certain Acts as impose prohibitory Tolls on Steam Carriages; and to grant to Mr. Gurney an extension of his Patent-right.

Your Committee, however, are of opinion, considering the great importance and value of the invention; considering also the interest of parties who, taking advantage of the unavoidable suspension of the subject by Mr. Gurney, have been speculating on the speedy termination of his Patent-right: Considering all these things, Your Committee repeat, that they are of opinion that it would be more advantageous to the public, and possibly, in his present narrowed circumstances, occasioned by his heavy losses, even more agreeable to himself, if this extension of the Patent-right were purchased of Mr. Gurney at the public expense.—For such a proceeding, precedents are not wanting, even where Parliament had not interfered by its enactments to the injury of the parties.

In 1775, Parliament, by an Act, granted to Mr. Watt an extension for 25 years, from the date of his application, of his Patent for the Steam Engine.

In the case of Dr. Cartwright's weaving machine, Parliament granted, in 1809, 10,000 *l.* to him in consideration of the loss to his Patent and its practical suspension on account of riotous proceedings on the part of bodies of weavers, which deterred capitalists from availing themselves of the use of the machine.

Mr. Palmer also had (1808, 1812 and 1813) three separate grants, amounting in the whole to 217,966 *l.*, for substituting coaches, in the place of horses, for conveying the mails.

In 1810, 1812 and 1814, Captain Manby had three separate grants, in the whole 5,250 *l.*, for his mode of effecting communication with ships stranded.

In the year 1833, in the case of Mr. Morton's slip-dock, an extension of the Patent term was recommended, which was subsequently purchased at the public expense for 2,500 *l.*

Parliamentary or Government grants have been made to various other individuals too numerous to specify. Among others of late years, Mr. M'Adam, Mr. Rotch, Mr. Babbage, Lieut. Rodgers, &c. &c.

Many of these cases, it is true, are more in the nature of rewards for ingenious and useful inventions, than of reparation by the Legislature for injury committed on individuals, in consequence of its own enactments. But if they are precedents for reward, how much more strongly are they so for an act of retributive justice.

Your Committee, whatever their individual opinions may be, as to the claims of Mr. Gurney in this respect, have not felt themselves called upon to enter into the subject of State rewards for ingenious and useful discoveries. That such rewards, in the end, redound more to the advantage of the public than even of the fortunate inventor himself, and that it is a system highly becoming a great and commercial country, seems scarcely to admit of doubt; Your Committee, however, have confined themselves immediately to the object set forth in Mr. Gurney's Petition, which is an appeal to the justice rather than the generosity of Parliament.

Before proceeding to their final recommendation on the subject, Your Committee may observe, that when an extension of the Patent was suggested to Mr. Gurney, he appeared to feel that, unless the Legislature would at the same time empower him to incorporate a Company, or in some other way enable him to raise sufficient funds to re-establish his manufactory, which the imposition of prohibitory tolls, and his consequent losses had compelled him to throw up, the extension of his Patent would be of comparatively small value to him. To build and actually run his Steam Carriage on some public road, in order to remove the impression of failure arising out of the suspension of his operations, appeared to him the requisite preliminary step, after the repeal of the prohibitory tolls. Under his total loss of connexion and resources, however, it was impossible for him, unassisted, to proceed in this manner. Meanwhile others (running carriages on his own principles, but whom for want of means he would be unable to resist in a court of law) would be establishing themselves in the great lines of road, and would thus destroy the advantage he had always expected from a precedence in the invention.

By the present law, not more than five persons can join in a Patent; and parties cannot form Joint Stock Companies for such a purpose (unless protected by a charter) without exposing the whole of their property to hazard. On the other hand, an individual, although in the possession of a valuable Patent, from the anomalous state of our Patent laws, has no redress from infringement but in a court of law, which, if he has been deprived of his available resources, he cannot enter; under such circumstances his Patent may be invaded with impunity. It is generally understood that the defence of his Patent in courts of law, although nothing could be clearer than his right, cost Mr. Watt 30,000*l*. At this very moment Steam Carriages started by others, but on Mr. Gurney's principles, are, after successful experiment, ready to run on common roads. These parties might never have had existence but for the suspension of Mr. Gurney's operations in consequence of the imposition of prohibitory tolls. This is evident from the testimony of the various scientific witnesses.

Dr. Lardner is asked,

"905. Do you conceive that steam carriages could have been run on common roads without all the advantages you have described as emanating from Mr. Gurney's invention?—I decidedly think not, though those advantages may possibly be obtained by other means; but obtained they must be, otherwise they could not run with advantage.

"906. You conceive that any carriages that have since been adopted are, in fact, only modifications of Mr. Gurney's principle?—I think in spirit many of them are so. They are substantially modifications, though I do not mean to say that they are infractions of his patent."

Mr. Gordon, a civil engineer, who has especially applied himself to the subject of Steam Carriages for a number of years, and written extensively on it, is asked,

"828. Is it your opinion that, if the capitalists who were at the time contracting with Mr. Gurney for the use of this carriage had not been impeded by those heavy tolls, Mr. Gurney's carriages at this time would have been both practicable and in general operation, and would have been paying a high profit to Mr. Gurney?—My impression is, that upon the road to which I have alluded, and upon several other roads, they would now have been in profitable operation, both to speculators in the carrying trade, and also to Mr. Gurney, the patentee, by necessary consequence.

"829. Is it your opinion, that the credit due to this invention is mainly or entirely due to Mr. Gurney?—I have not the least hesitation, and I do not suppose that there is any man who knows anything on the subject who would have any hesitation in saying, Mr. Gurney is the person who gave it birth, and brought it into a practical state.

"830. Can you state it as a fact, that it is the opinion of practical engineers, and the first engineers of the day, that Mr. Gurney is the first inventor?—Yes.

"831. Whom?—I have talked with several.

"832. Is it your opinion that what Mr. Gurney has done has led to the creation of those carriages that are now running?—It has given birth to them all; they have been successful (and I must state it strongly) just in proportion as they have followed the principles which Mr. Gurney found it necessary to introduce.

"833. Do you conceive that they are trenching upon Mr. Gurney's patent?—I have seen a carriage that does trench upon his principles; and I have ridden by it.

"834. What carriage is that?—I should rather not answer the question, if the Committee will not press it. In this carriage, to which I allude, the principal defect is in the boiler's not having a good circulation. The owner has got a circulation upon Mr. Gurney's principle; and he has lately introduced a larger separator to his boiler, in order to come near to Mr. Gurney's other principle; for there were two principles acted on by Mr. Gurney, separation and circulation.

"835. Do you suppose that the object of the proprietor of this steam engine is to go as near the wind as he can to Mr. Gurney's principle without invading it?—I do not say what his object has been, but he has done so."

Mr. Macneil, the celebrated mathematician, and a civil engineer of high repute, confirms this view: he is asked,

"1049. You have spoken of a considerable number of persons who tried experiments upon the subject of steam carriages; were those original inventions of parties, or were they modifications or a copy of Mr. Gurney's invention?—Some are very close copies of the principle of that invention. I think that Mr. Hancock's is very little removed from it, but that it is not so safe as Mr. Gurney's, because flat chambers cannot be so strong as tubular ones; and I think that to a certain extent Mr. Ogle's is similar to Mr. Gurney's, because it was the separation of the water into small portions, that in this apparatus was very like the great improvement Mr. Gurney made. Dr. Church's boiler, I think, differs little from Mr. Ogle's. I am not acquainted with Mr. Gibbs's at all, nor do I know what he has done. Of Sharpe's and Roberts's invention I have no knowledge. Colonel Macerone's is also, I think, nearly the same as Mr. Ogle's."

And when speaking of the several persons then engaged in experiment on the subject, he is asked,

"1068. Do you think they look at all to the Legislature taking off those prohibitory tolls?—I think they do; the impression amongst them all is, that there will be a general Act passed placing a certain toll upon all steam carriages, at a very small rate.

"1069. And this is an inducement to them to make the experiments, preparatory to any Act of that kind coming into operation?—It is not the actual inducement to their making those experiments, but this expectation no doubt stimulates them.

"1070. Do you think any of them are looking to the end of Mr. Gurney's patent?—I have no doubt, if Mr. Gurney's patent was thrown open to-morrow, there would be many new steam carriages commenced that are not now thought of.

"1071. Do you conceive that it would be a great advantage to the public if Mr. Gurney's patent was thrown open?—I think so.

"1072. Do you think, considering the failure that has taken place, if persons were able to follow out Mr. Gurney's invention, without fear of trespassing upon his patent, that steam carriages would be more safe to the public?—I believe they are all safe enough; but I am of opinion steam carriages would be brought much sooner into general use if the patent was thrown open, that every person could avail himself of the advantage which has been gained by Mr. Gurney's experience; for I am persuaded that several have put themselves to great trouble to avoid infringing his patent."

Under these circumstances, circumstances of great hardship to Mr. Gurney, circumstances also in which other individuals as well as the public are materially interested, Your Committee, after the most mature consideration, recommend

1. That such portions of all Acts as impose prohibitory tolls on Steam Carriages be immediately repealed, and that other tolls, on an equitable footing with Horse Carriages, be substituted by a general Act.

2. That there be granted to Mr. Gurney, free of expense, an extension of his Patent-right for the term of 14 years beyond the legal termination of the existing protection to his invention: or rather,

3. That a sum of not less than (5,000 *l.*) be offered to Mr. Gurney by Parliament, in lieu of such extension of his Patent, with a view of affording to the public more immediately the benefit that must arise out of his invention; and as a more advisable expedient than giving Parliamentary protection to a public company, to enable Mr. Gurney to prosecute his object.

In deciding on the foregoing recommendations, Your Committee have not neglected to take into their consideration the fact, which appears in evidence, that there are certain other parties to whom Mr. Gurney has assigned over about one-third of the interest in his Patent, on whom also a certain degree of injury has been committed by the imposition of the prohibitory tolls.

Should

Should The House, therefore, see fit to adopt the recommendation of Your Committee with respect to the extension of the Patent, or the purchase of it, they beg still further to advise that half of the interest of the one, or half of the purchase-money of the other (in consideration of his greater losses), be dedicated exclusively to the use of Mr. Gurney, and free from all claims by the parties above alluded to; and that, with respect to the other half, Mr. Gurney should be considered in the light of the legal representative of the Patent, and liable, in respect of that moiety only, to such proportionate claims by those parties as might, otherwise, have been made upon him in respect of the whole sum.

In conclusion, Your Committee have extracted a short passage from Mr. Gurney's evidence of this Session, in reference to his former and present occupation in life, in order to show the advantageous position he deserted to pursue the subject of Steam Carriages; as well as that the public is deeply indebted to Mr. Gurney for other useful and practical discoveries in addition to that of the Steam Carriage.

" 1. What were your pursuits, Mr. Gurney, prior to your experiments in steam carriages?—I was engaged in medical practice, and also in chemical pursuits.

" 2. What was the value of your profession at the time you gave it up?—The value of my profession was about 1,000 *l.* a year. I received about 300 *l.* to 400 *l.* a year from chemical lectures, and analysis, &c.

" 3. Where was your chemical class?—In Argyle-street. I was also engaged as a public lecturer. I succeeded Dr. Thompson, of Glasgow, in London. The chemical pursuits from which I obtained the most profit was that of the class in Argyle-street.

" 4. Had you a large class?—Yes; for the views I had with regard to chemistry were thought to be original and valuable: in consequence of this feeling, I had very eminent men as pupils. I mention this solely to show that my views were considered valuable and sound by scientific men. The late Dr. Luke was a pupil of mine; at the time he was 60 years of age, and in full practice; the celebrated Dr. Armstrong, Sir A. Carlisle, and a great many other eminent physicians and surgeons in extensive practice.

" 5. Did you publish at all on chemical practice?—Yes, I did. I published several essays on chemistry, but more particularly a work on the elements of chemical science.

" 6. Why have you not returned to your profession since the suspension of your steam carriage?—From the feeling that the subject of steam carriages, to which I devoted my life, would be relieved; that I should again follow that subject which I was so particularly impressed with the importance of; again, on the other hand, that as I had left my profession and was following other pursuits, I stood very little chance of regaining a practice.

" 7. How long have you left it?—Since 1825, ten years.

" 8. What have you been engaged in lately?—I have been engaged in nothing since the suspension of the subject of steam carriages, till within the last four months, of any consequence.

" 9. What is the nature of this engagement?—In January I was employed by the Trinity House, in consequence of a request of the Chairman of the late Committee on Lighthouses, to make some experiments on light for the illumination of lighthouses, in pursuance of some views which I published in 1823. Those experiments were connected with the lime light, a light produced from lime by the combustion of a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen gas. The Lighthouse Committee have reported that this light is of great importance connected with the shipping interest; and in consequence of the subject having been proposed by me in 1823, I was requested to follow out the subject and reduce it to practice.

" 10. Then there were difficulties to its use?—It is reported by the Committee that there were a great many practical difficulties in the way, as proposed by Lieutenant Drummond, which prevented it being practically used. I have followed out the subject since last January, and believe have succeeded in removing every practical difficulty connected with this light. The Committee on Lighthouses have recently inspected it, and have expressed themselves satisfied that the difficulties which have hung over the subject have now been removed.

 " 11. Did

" 11. Did not the Committee on Lighthouses witness another new light?—In my experiments upon this subject, I certainly discovered another mode of producing light, which is considered by the Elder Brethren of the Trinity Board, and I believe also by several Members of the Committee on Lighthouses, to be more valuable and important than the lime light.

" 12. Then the Trinity Board will adopt it?—The Trinity Board are about to adopt this light, at least I believe so; they have written to me to know the terms on which I would agree to establish it. This light has been called the 'Bude Light,' for distinction's sake, from an association with my residence in Cornwall.

" 13. Are the Trinity Board and the Committee on Lighthouses, who have inspected these experiments of yours, satisfied with their practicability?—They stated as much to me.

" 17. Do you conceive that those lights, either the oxygen light or the Bude light, would operate very advantageously for lighthouses?—No doubt of it. For a better opinion I would refer to the Report of the Committee on Lighthouses, who were inquiring on the subject the whole of the last session.

" 18. Are there any ordinary fogs at sea through which the common light cannot be seen at all, when either of those other lights could be seen at a considerable distance?—Yes. Some fogs which would prevent the rays from the present lighthouse penetrating the atmosphere would not prevent the new lights.

" 19. Then in fact this light would be of immense importance to the mercantile marine?—It is thought so.

" 20. And probably a great saving of life and property?—No doubt of it.

" 21. Will you state why what is called Drummond's light was not brought there?—I do not know; I believe Lieutenant Drummond first took up the subject in 1826 or 1827; and only having occasion to use it upon the surveys which he made at that time, and subsequently under the passing of the Reform Act, and being engaged as secretary to Lord Althorp, he did not follow it out, having no time.

" 22. What was the principal obstacle in the way of this succeeding for lighthouses?—The great obstacles were that of mixing the gases in definite proportions; and that of keeping the lime from breaking or cracking; there were various other minor points, but those were the great ones. The light, it is stated in the evidence before the Committee, was constantly varying, and could not be kept up with certainty for more than a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes; it can now be kept up for any length of time without the least possible chance of variation or intensity.

" 23. You have yourself within the last four months removed those obstacles?—Yes; they are certainly removed.

" 24. To the satisfaction of the Trinity Board?—I believe so.

" 25. You state that Lieutenant Drummond made what he conceived to be his discovery in 1827, and that you made yours in 1823; what proof can you give that you started the subject first?—The description and account of it which I published in 1823. My book was published by Mr. Whittaker, Ave Maria-lane; an extract from that work is published by the Committee on Lighthouses, containing my proposition.

" 26. Was the subject ever brought before the Royal Society or the Society of Arts?—Yes; the instrument by which I obtained the light.

" 27. Did you not receive an honorary medal?—I had the honour of receiving a gold medal from the Duke of Sussex for its invention. The Duke was much struck with the intensity of light produced with it, and said, he thought at no very distant time this light would be used for many useful purposes.

" 28. Can you at all account for the subject seeming to die away, and Lieutenant Drummond having the credit since the year 1827 of having invented this light?—So far only as regards myself. I relinquished it in consequence of my application to the subject of steam carriages; I gave up every thing at that time for it, being impressed with its importance.

" 29. You not only gave up your profession, but this important subject of light, in order to follow up the subject of steam carriages?—Yes.

" 30. Have you ever received any remuneration from the Trinity House in consequence of this light?—The subject is at this moment under consideration."

10 *July* 1835.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

LIST OF WITNESSES.

Martis, 26° die Maii, 1835.		Martis, 16° die Junii, 1835.	
Mr. *Goldsworthy Gurney* - - -	p. 19	*William Anderson Portal* - - -	p. 33
		Mr. *Goldsworthy Gurney* - - -	p. 34

Martis, 26° die Maii, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. *Goldsworthy Gurney,* called in; and Examined.

Mr. *G. Gurney.*

26 May 1835.

1. WHAT were your pursuits, Mr. Gurney, prior to your experiments in steam-carriages?—I was engaged in medical practice, and also in chemical pursuits.

2. What was the value of your profession at the time you gave it up?—The value of my profession was about 1,000 *l.* a year. I received about 300 *l.* to 400 *l.* a year from chemical lectures, and analysis, &c.

3. Where was your chemical class?—In Argyle-street. I was also engaged as a public lecturer. I succeeded Dr. Thompson, of Glasgow, in London. The chemical pursuits from which I obtained the most profit was that of the class in Argyle-street.

4. Had you a large class?—Yes; for the views I had with regard to chemistry were thought to be original and valuable: in consequence of this feeling, I had very eminent men as pupils. I mention this solely to show that my views were considered valuable and sound by scientific men. The late Dr. Luke was a pupil of mine, at the time he was 60 years of age, and in full practice; the celebrated Dr. Armstrong, Sir A. Carlisle, and a great many other eminent physicians and surgeons in extensive practice.

5. Did you publish at all on chemical practice?—Yes, I did. I published several essays on chemistry, but more particularly a work on the elements of chemical science.

6. Why have you not returned to your profession since the suspension of your steam carriage?—From the feeling that the subject of steam-carriages, to which I devoted my life, would be relieved; that I should again follow that subject which I was so particularly impressed with the importance of; again, on the other hand, that as I had left my profession and was following other pursuits, I stood very little chance of regaining a practice.

7. How long have you left it?—Since 1825, ten years.

8. What have you been in engaged in lately?—I have been engaged in nothing since the suspension of the subject of steam-carriages, till within the last four months, of any consequence.

9. What is the nature of this engagement?—In January I was employed by the Trinity House, in consequence of a request of the Chairman of the late Committee on Lighthouses, to make some experiments on light for the illumination of light-houses, in pursuance of some views which I published in 1823. Those experiments were connected with the lime light, a light produced from lime by the combustion of a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen gas. The Lighthouse Committee have reported that this light is of great importance connected with the shipping interest; and in consequence of the subject having been proposed by me in 1823, I was requested to follow out the subject and reduce it to practice.

10. Then there were difficulties to its use?—It is reported by the Committee that there were a great many practical difficulties in the way, as proposed by Lieutenant Drummond, which prevented it being practically used. I have followed out the subject since last January, and believe have succeeded in removing every practical difficulty connected with this light. The Committee on Lighthouses have recently inspected it, and have expressed themselves satisfied that the difficulties which have hung over the subject have now been removed.

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11. Did not the Committee on Lighthouses witness another new light?—In my experiments upon this subject, I certainly discovered another mode of producing light, which is considered by the Elder Brethren of the Trinity Board, and I believe also by several Members of the Committee on Lighthouses, to be more valuable and important than the lime light.

12. Then the Trinity Board will adopt it?—The Trinity Board are about to adopt this light, at least I believe so; they have written to me to know the terms on which I would agree to establish it. This light has been called the "Bude Light," for distinction's sake, from an association with my residence in Cornwall.

13. Are the Trinity Board and the Committee on Lighthouses, who have inspected these experiments of yours, satisfied with their practicability?—They stated as much to me.

14. Now what materials is this new light composed of?—Oxygen and nacent carbon.

15. And what was its intensity compared with the oxy-hydrogen?—The oxy-hydrogen light produced under the best possible circumstances from egg shells is equal to about 290 times that of the Argand burner. The Bude light 140; but from its great simplicity, quantity and certainty, is considered to be more valuable for the purpose of illumination of lighthouses.

16. In what proportion?—One hundred and forty times greater than the Argand burner.

17. Do you conceive that those lights, either the oxygen light or the Bude light, would operate very advantageously for lighthouses?—No doubt of it. For a better opinion, I would refer to the Report of the Committee on Lighthouses, who were inquiring on the subject the whole of the last session.

18. Are there any ordinary fogs at sea through which the common light cannot be seen at all, when either of those other lights could be seen at a considerable distance?—Yes. Some fogs which would prevent the rays from the present lighthouse penetrating the atmosphere would not prevent the new lights.

19. Then in fact this light would be of immense importance to the mercantile marine?—It is thought so.

20. And probably a great saving of life and property?—No doubt of it.

21. Will you state why what is called Drummond's light was not brought there?—I do not know; I believe Lieutenant Drummond first took up the subject in 1826 or 1827; and only having occasion to use it upon the surveys which he made at that time, and subsequently under the passing of the Reform Act, and being engaged as secretary to Lord Althorp, he did not follow it out, having no time.

22. What was the principal obstacle in the way of this succeeding for lighthouses?—The great obstacles were that of mixing the gases in definite proportions; and that of keeping the lime from breaking or cracking: there were various other minor points, but those were the great ones. The light, it is stated in the evidence before the Committee, was constantly varying, and could not be kept up with certainty for more than a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes; it can now be kept up for any length of time without the least possible chance of variation or intensity.

23. You have yourself within the last four months removed those obstacles?—Yes; they are certainly removed.

24. To the satisfaction of the Trinity Board?—I believe so.

25. You state that Lieutenant Drummond made what he conceived to be his discovery in 1827, and that you made yours in 1823; what proof can you give that you started the subject first?—The description and account of it which I published in 1823. My book was published by Messrs. Whittaker, Ave Maria-lane; an extract from that work is published by the Committee on Lighthouses, containing my proposition.

26. Was the subject ever brought before the Royal Society or the Society of Arts?—Yes; the instrument by which I obtained the light.

27. Did you not receive an honorary medal?—I had the honour of receiving a gold medal from the Duke of Sussex for its invention. The Duke was much struck with the intensity of light produced with it, and said, he thought at no very distant time this light would be used for many useful purposes.

28. Can you at all account for the subject seeming to die away, and Lieutenant Drummond having the credit since the year 1827 of having invented this light?—So far only as regards myself. I relinquished it in consequence of my application to the subject of steam carriages; I gave up every thing at that time for it, being impressed with its importance.

29. You

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29. You not only gave up your profession, but this important subject of light, in order to follow up the subject of steam carriages?—Yes.

30. Have you ever received any remuneration from the Trinity House in consequence of this light?—The subject is at this moment under consideration.

31. What was the expense of fitting up your manufactory for building steam carriages?—The expense of the first outlay was about 4,000 *l.* in fitting up and purchase of the manufactory, with tools and lathes and forges, and the different arrangements that were necessary.

32. Were you obliged to sell your establishment, your manufactory and tools?—Yes; I kept on the manufactory from 1825 to 1832.

33. You had had the manufactory previous to 1831?—From 1825.

34. You kept open the manufactory from 1831 to 1832, during the suspension of the subject, and while an investigation was taking place on the subject within the last twelve months?—The last twelve months the manufactory was shut up, waiting, in the hope that the legislative restrictions would be removed, and that I should again go on. The last year I only paid the rent and taxes.

35. What do you estimate your loss at the forced sale?—I think about 6,000 *l.* I refer to the evidence of Mr. Dady, who kept all the accounts; and from my own reference to the papers that I have, I find that the stock and materials increased to the value of 9,000 *l.*, which was the estimate taken and given in by Mr. Stone, who valued the premises, when it was suspended.

36. Who is Mr. Dady?—The clerk who had the management of the manufactory and materials.

37. Was Dady examined as to your losses in these forced sales?—He was.

38. Can you refer to his answer?—I can. At paragraph 775, he is asked, "Do you know what was given for the factory, and the tools and apparatus to fit it up?" *A.* "I do not recollect exactly, but I think about 3,000 *l.* or 4,000 *l.*"—*Q.* "Do you recollect the estimates that were taken of it a short time before the factory was closed?" *A.* "I recollect Mr. Stone taking an inventory and making an estimate."—*Q.* "Do you recollect what his value was of the fixtures?" *A.* "No, I do not; but I think they were a considerably deal more than they were when they were purchased."—*Q.* "You do not recollect what?" *A.* "It amounted to as much as 8,000 *l.*; but I do not remember exactly."

39. How do you calculate your loss from that statement?—Because the forced sale produced 6,000 *l.* minus of its value and cost.

40. Did any of your co-patentees suffer by this loss?—No.

41. Will you give a general statement of your expenditure and your losses in pursuing the subject of steam carriages?—The direct and indirect losses are as follows.

DIRECT LOSS OF MONEY paid out of Pocket:

Paid six years' rent and taxes, at 1,000 *l.* per annum	£. 6,000
Paid for four patents and specifications	1,200
Paid wages	15,000
Loss by forced sale on tools, lathes and fittings-up of manufactory	6,000
Paid for materials, over and above that accounted for the loss in forced sale	8,000
Direct Loss	£. 36,200
Received from sale of patents, contracts, &c.	20,000
Money paid out of pocket from private funds, over and above what had been received from others	£. 16,200

INDIRECT LOSS:

Sale of the Scotch patent and contract for road from Edinburgh to Liverpool	£. 17,000
Loss by precedence of railways for five years, from fair expected mileage duty on those great roads	15,000
By fair expected mileage duty from contracts entered into	50,000
By fair expected mileage duty on the remaining great roads	150,000
	£. 232,000

Also loss by 10 years' sacrifice of my possession.

I paid 36,000 *l.* during the six years the manufactory was at work.

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42. For what?—For wages, materials, rent, clerks' salaries, &c. I paid for materials (not reckoned in the losses of the forced sale) 8,000 *l.*; this is borne out by the evidence of Mr. Dady, who took it from his books and from the accounts he kept at the manufactory.

43. Can you refer to the evidence of Mr. Dady on that point?—Mr. Dady was called up, as many of the other witnesses were, before the last Committee very suddenly. The first day, he said he had not seen the books for two years, and could not charge his memory; he is therefore called up again the next day, after he had seen and examined the books and referred to the accounts he kept, and he is asked, para. 755, "Are you acquainted at all with the weekly expenses of Mr. Gurney's manufactory? *A.* Yes.—*Q.* During what period? *A.* From the year 1825 to the spring of 1832.—*Q.* What were the weekly expenses during that time. *A.* They were sometimes more than others; some weeks, at the highest, they were 100 *l.*, and sometimes they were down as low as between 30 *l.* or 40 *l.*" Now, taking the average, therefore, at 50 *l.* only per week, which is a low average, for six years it will amount to 15,000 *l.* He says, para. 759, when asked, "Can you at all speak as to the total amount of your weekly expenses during those years? *A.* I think the sum total was about, from a rough calculation that I made at the end of the year 1830, 16,000 *l.* or 17,000 *l.*" This agrees with the previous estimate taken weekly. There is a direct loss also in the payment for the patents and specification; I paid 1,200 *l.* for patents, specifications and drawings connected with steam carriages. Now the whole sum expended amounts to 36,000 *l.* out of pocket.

44. Has your expenditure in pursuing the subject, and your loss in consequence, arisen from your having been obliged to give it up by forced sales?—Yes, the direct loss.

45. You reckon expenses under the total of direct loss?—Yes.

46. Part of this is the payment of wages and payment of rent?—Part is the payment of wages, part payment of rent, and part for materials.

47. Have all those wages and all those rents been paid by you?—Yes, every farthing. Every account has been paid connected with the manufactory up to 40 *l.*, which is a disputed account; but up to this the whole of the materials and the rent has been paid.

48. You estimate your expenses and direct loss at 36,000 *l.*?—That is the amount of money I have expended. But I should state that I have received from the sale of my patents, which nevertheless is *bonâ fide* my own property, as much so as any private property, contracts for roads, &c., that I have received 20,000 *l.*; therefore if that sum be deducted from 36,000 *l.*, the money expended, it leaves 16,000 *l.* dead loss out of my pocket; and which I find, on looking over my accounts, is the sum of money that has been advanced by me from my private sources and money advanced by my friends, independently of the sales of my patent and contracts.

49. What do you mean by money advanced by myself and friends; is it not a direct loss of your own, or is it shared by others?—It is a direct loss of my own.

50. What do you mean by the term your friends?—I advanced myself, from my own private resources, about 10,000 *l.*; there was 6,000 *l.* advanced to me by my friends at the time on my account.

51. You are liable to be called upon by your friends for the 6,000 *l.* now?—Those accounts have since been arranged.

52. You conceive 16,000 *l.* to be the balance of your direct loss?—My own personal loss in the manufactory, in which the patentees connected with the patent were not interested.

53. Will you state what are your indirect losses?—The indirect loss is very considerable. The sale of the Scotch patent alone 17,000 *l.*, as borne out by the evidence of Mr. Ward, was entirely lost by the passing of the tolls.

54. Can you refer to Mr. Ward's evidence on that?—Mr. Ward (page 48, question 607), after having stated the contract for the purchase of the patent, was asked, "If he considered the invention as perfect? *A.* I considered it as perfect. —*Q.* What were the terms of the purchase of the Scotch patent? *A.* I was to have paid 15,000 *l.* in 5,000 *l.* instalments.—*Q.* You were to have paid Mr. Gurney 15,000 *l.*? *A.* Yes.—*Q.* Was that contract extended afterwards to Liverpool, to join your line of road? *A.* Yes, it was, and was made subsequently at Edinburgh. I was much inclined to follow up my London and Liverpool line to Edinburgh, and I therefore offered Mr. Gurney an extra 2,000 *l.* if he would allow me to have that road included in my Scotch patent; that is to say, if I gave him 17,000 *l.*,

17,000 *l.*, that he would throw in the Liverpool and Edinburgh roads.—*Q.* Were the terms of that contract ever fulfilled? *A.* No, they were not.—*Q.* Was the sum of 17,000 *l.*, or any part of it, ever paid by you to Mr. Gurney? *A.* No; I was to pay 5,000 *l.* in the course of two months after the period that I entered into the agreement.—*Q.* Did you ever pay any part of that? *A.* No.—*Q.* Will you explain the reason why you did not pay it? *A.* I did not pay that 5,000 *l.* because of the heavy tolls being put on, which amounted, in my opinion, to a prohibition."

55. Have you stated when the first 5,000 *l.* was to be paid?—Within two months. I should further, in answer to the last question, refer to question 632, "Can you assign any other reason for not fulfilling your contract than the tolls which the House of Commons were gradually and generally imposing upon private trusts? *A.* My reason for giving it up was the fear that the tolls would not stop there, but that they would be extended to become a prohibition to the invention.—*Q.* Did you ever hear of a Bill going through the House of Commons to put a stop to the imposition of those heavy tolls upon steam carriages? *A.* I did not understand that they were to be taken off for certain.—*Q.* Were there any tolls imposed interfering with your patent in Scotland? *A.* Oh, yes.—*Q.* What amount of tolls were laid upon the steam carriages running upon the roads which you have described as being affected by your contract? *A.* The Highgate, Whetstone, St. Albans and Coventry tolls amounted to 5 *s.* each for my two carriages; this would have been at the rate of nearly 1 *s.* per mile, taking the length of each trust; and as I contemplated running small posting tugs, it must have been a prohibition. On the Edinburgh line, the Liverpool and Preston was 12 *s.* each time of passing. The Liverpool and Preston was charged on the horse-power, and would amount to 2 *l.* 8 *s.* each time of passing. The Bathgate Road, between Glasgow and Edinburgh, in the bill which I saw, amounted, I think, to 1 *l.* 7 *s.* each time of passing." He is asked in question 621, "Were you sanguine up to that period of the success of those carriages as to the capability? *A.* Decidedly; I am at this moment." I refer to this simply to show that he never lost his confidence.

56. At what particular moment did you enter into this contract with Mr. Ward?—The first contract was at the time the carriages were running to Gloucester; during the time of Sir Charles Dance's successful experiment for four months between Gloucester and Cheltenham.

57. Did not the agreement stipulate that you were to receive your first 5,000 *l.* within two months of that period?—Yes.

58. When did Sir Charles Dance cease to run his carriage between Gloucester and Cheltenham?—In June 1831.

59. Sir Charles Dance gave up in consequence of the rapid imposition of tolls?—Yes. I will make one observation with regard to the subject here, namely, that there were two agreements with Mr. Ward, the last for the Scotch patent to join his line which he previously contracted for.

60. When was that?—I think in June 1831.

61. Sir Charles Dance gave up running the carriage between Gloucester and Cheltenham in consequence of the imposition of those tolls?—Yes.

62. Your contract was in January preceding?—No, in the early part of June.

63. Was your contract with Ward in June?—Yes, for the sale of the Scotch patent.

64. Was it by the last contract you were to receive the first 5,000 *l.* of the 17,000 *l.*?—Yes.

65. That contract was in June?—Yes, the early part of June, if I recollect correctly; I have the agreement.

66. Between your contract and the expiration of two months the imposition of tolls in Parliament became so rapid as to prevent Mr. Ward going on with his contract?—Yes.

67. Did this imposition of tolls occur exactly at the interval between the completing of your contract with Mr. Ward in June and the expiration of the two months when you were to receive your first instalment of 5,000 *l.*?—Yes.

68. If that be so, how does it happen that Mr. Ward never fulfilled the terms of his contract?—As the question is asked him, I refer to his own answer before the last Committee. "*Q.* 615. Will you explain the reason why you did not pay it? *A.* I did not pay that 5,000 *l.* because of the heavy tolls being put on, which amounted, in my opinion, to a prohibition."

 69. Had

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69. Had you no means of compelling him to the fulfilling of the contract?—I could not have compelled him without going into a Court of Chancery.

70. Why?—I consulted my solicitor upon the subject; he said an action could not be brought except in the Court of Chancery; and as it was always understood between the parties and contractors that if Government interfered so as to prohibit the subject, by tolls or excessive duty, no proceedings should be taken to enforce dead loss upon them.

71. There were witnesses to such an understanding?—Yes.

72. Did you contemplate the imposition of those tolls?—Yes, and all the patentees and contractors. Here are some letters of Mr. Hanning's which refer to the subject so far back as 1829. We had always a dread of the imposition, not directly, of tolls, but we thought it likely the agricultural interests would become alarmed and frightened at such a subject of this kind. We expected that, like all other great subjects, great opposition would be made to its practical introduction, and perhaps the Legislature would cause us to pause before it would suffer us to go on; this was a continual argument with us, and we constantly had conversations and meetings upon the subject.

73. Was there a general understanding, in case any new difficulty arose, that your contract was to be modified or avoided?—There was this understanding. I wrote to Mr. Hanning, who had the great western contracts, the suspicion that was entertained by some of an interference on the part of the Legislature. In one of his letters, dated the 18th August 1829, he says, "To suppose" (he was of a different opinion) "that the Minister would for a moment think of crippling the energies of the engine is most improbable; the advocates of such a measure might as well petition against steam power on land, because it lessens manual labour, and against its use on the sea, because we now are most powerful there under the use of canvass." This passage shows that we feared the interference of the Legislature, and made our contracts not knowing in which way; but when we found that a number of Acts were passing imposing prohibitory tolls, it came like a thunderbolt, and struck us with the greatest alarm, as stated in the evidence of last session.

74. Mr. Hanning himself was a great agriculturist?—Yes; not only so, but a man of very large fortune, a spirited man, who took immense interest in inland transport. In connexion with his friend Lord Heathfield, he made a new road from London to Exeter, and established an admirable line of coaches on it.

75. Are there any witnesses alive that can bear testimony to this understanding between you and Mr. Ward, that if any Parliamentary interfence was to take place that the contract was to be avoided?—Yes.

76. Is your solicitor alive?—Yes.

77. What is his name?—Mr. Portal, Clifford's Inn.

78. Was Mr. Ward ever applied to to fulfil the terms of the contract by you?—Not legally; I personally applied to him to fulfil the contract; his answer was, he could not fulfil it under the circumstances.

79. Did he give as a reason that you had had an understanding it was not to be fulfilled in case of the Parliamentary interference?—That was so generally and clearly understood between all persons contracting, that perhaps it might or it might not have been mentioned.

80. In that case, if there was that understanding between you and Mr. Ward, why did you apply to your solicitor for the purpose of consulting him as to the probable result of an action?—I consulted him generally upon all the contracts as to the fulfilment of them.

81. Did your solicitor give you any hopes, if you did go into a Court of Chancery, that you would have succeeded there?—He said it would be very doubtful.

82. From the beginning it was your idea and that of other persons concerned in the undertaking, that as it was an undertaking which might interfere with the profits of great landed proprietors and other influential persons, it was probable that Parliament would interfere to crush the enterprise at the outset?—This was the fear of many; some had a different opinion, amongst the rest was Mr. Hanning.

83. Does Mr. Ward give in any part of his evidence of last session any other reason than that of imposition of tolls for giving up the contract?—No other reason. He says he had made arrangements for the resale of the patents from himself, for which he was to have received 30,000 *l.*

89. From

84. From whom; from respectable parties?—Yes. I was sent to Edinburgh to ascertain who they were. In his evidence, when asked, para. 644, and following, *Q.* "Did you enter into a contract with those other parties? *A.* I did not enter into a written contract; but this party was pledged to me by the most respectable houses in Edinburgh.—*Q.* Will you have any objection to state the amount of that? *A.* I can have no hesitation to state at this period I was to have received 32,000 *l.* for the patent right in Scotland, by instalments.—*Q.* Were the negotiations pending at the time of these tolls being imposed? *A.* Yes, they were. I directed my agent to write about them.—*Q.* Were those negotiations broken off in consequence of the tolls being imposed? *A.* I refused to comply with the payment of the first instalment.—*Q.* Were the persons with whom you negotiated anxious for the completion of the negotiation? *A.* They were anxious; they would have fulfilled it if I had pressed it, but I could not think of pressing it when I did not see profit arising myself; in fact, I could not have taken upon myself to have paid Mr. Gurney the 5,000 *l.* when I was impressed with the idea that I should have gained no profit.—*Q.* Were the parties with whom you negotiated scientific men or men competent to judge of the nature and success of those steam carriages? *A.* One or two of them were engineers themselves; they were perfectly convinced of the efficacy and practicability of the engines.—*Q.* And they had seen no reason up to that time to doubt of the success of the experiment? *A.* No; nor do I think that they have up to this period."

85. Were they men of substance?—Yes.

86. Is that stated in evidence?—Yes; Mr. Thiselton was called and examined last session on this point.

87. Who is Mr. Thiselton?—A patentee, who had the management of and kept the papers. He is asked at para. 849, "Was Mr. Gurney appointed by the patentees to go down to examine the references of Mr. Ward? *A.* He was.—*Q.* 850. Was he empowered to make a new arrangement there, in case he thought it necessary or desirable? *A.* Yes; at a full meeting of the patentees he was requested to go and enter into any contracts, and full powers were given to him to enter into any arrangements for our benefit."

88. In consequence of your inquiries at Edinburgh, did you report to your co-patentees that you were satisfied with the respectability of the parties?—Yes.

89. You have stated your loss, in consequence of the non-fulfilment of Mr. Ward's contract, to have been an indirect one?—Yes; I have put it under that head, because it was never received.

90. But you were to receive 5,000 *l.* within two months, and the nonpayment of that was in consequence of the interference of the Legislature; would you not rather consider that as a direct than an indirect loss?—I define *monies not received to be indirect*, and *monies actually paid out of my pocket as direct loss.*

91. Will you proceed to the next item of what you describe as your indirect losses?—The next indirect loss I should state would be, the five years' precedence that has been gained by the laying down of railways; for instance, in consequence of the suspension from 1831 up to the present moment, there would be a loss on the great road from Birmingham to London, which I estimate at a loss of 5,000 *l.*; again, the railway to Southampton, the railway to Greenwich, the Great Western Railway, I should have been five years in advance of all those railways; therefore there is a contingent loss, I conceive, on those roads of near 15,000 *l.* My expected patent duty, at 2 *d.* a mile only on the principal roads throughout England, would have amounted to from 150,000 *l.* to 200,000 *l.*

92. Had you no contract with anybody but Ward?—Yes, I had several contracts.

93. Will you state what those contracts are?—The contract with Mr. Hanning was a very important one, a contract for running steam coaches on all the great western roads, meeting Sir Charles Dance at Bristol and Mr. Bulnois at Southampton.

94. Did he purchase the patent out, or did he purchase merely a licence to run carriages at a certain rate per mile?—Mr. Hanning was in two capacities; he was not only a contractor, but also he had an interest in the patent. Mr. Hanning was the organ of a great number of contractors on the western roads. At the time Sir Charles Dance was running to Gloucester, Mr. Hanning gave orders for eight coaches, which were laid down with a view of establishing them upon the western line of road. Mr. Hanning's contract and order was given in at the last Committee, and proved by Mr. Dady, Mr. Ellis and others.

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95. Who is Mr. Ellis?—Mr. Hanning's solicitor. Mr. Ellis's evidence is possible to bear the construction that Mr. Hanning retired from the subject from other motives; Mr. Ellis was Mr. Hanning's solicitor, and therefore was very cautious how he committed his client. He however admits Mr. Hanning's contract, (*A.* 522,) and that he had sub-contracts; for (*A.* 523) he produces Mr. Hanning's handwriting and a memorandum, as follows: "November 26th, 1827: By check drawn payable to Mr. Gurney, under a contract for steam-coaches to be had of him by the nominees of W. H. on the Western Roads, 700*l.*" He delivered that to me in his own handwriting. He also says, Mr. Hanning directed his partner and himself to petition The House against the Cheltenham Road Bill (550); and when asked, "Did you ever hear him state his opinion as to the great tolls imposed by the local Acts of Parliament?—Yes; he directed my partner to support the prayer of the Bill to the House of Commons against one bill, the Cheltenham Road Bill, which contained a clause enacting very heavy tolls." This is no proof that Mr. Hanning had retired from it at that time from other motives. He is asked in 551, "Do you think that at all operated upon Mr. Hanning, to prevent his concluding his contract?—I think it was one among other causes, and I should say a very strong one." The other witnesses, however, speak positively to Mr. Hanning's opinions and feelings, to whose evidence I refer.

96. You wished to call Mr. Hanning, but he unfortunately died last year?—I was in great hopes I should have had his assistance, but he died about six weeks before the inquiry of last session. I wish further to state that in the letter, part of which has been read, Mr. Hanning showed his opinion with regard to the interference of the authorities against us; Mr. Hanning instantly came to town on my informing him of the discovery of the passing of those Acts, and he at once decided on petitioning The House, and gave his instructions to Mr. Ellis. Mr. Hanning stated, that as he was wrong in his opinion and deceived as to the proceeding of the Legislature, he should pause in regard to the subject. In support of that, I will refer to the evidence last session, because I think it is rather an important point, Mr. Hanning having such extensive contracts, and being a man of such large fortune. That he would not have withdrawn from it for any other reason is further proved by his own letters; here is one, dated in January 1832, which was 12 months after the passing of those Acts. In speaking of the tolls, and the endeavours I made to get rid of the prohibitions (for amongst other things I published a pamphlet, stating the hardship and setting forth the true state of the subject), he alludes to it, and says, "Your pamphlet I hope will solicit from Parliament and the public that fair competition and support that has been shown to the introduction of steam power for other uses; above all things, that equality of tolls should be levied, as compared with what is paid by carriages drawn by horses, for without such protection from Parliament the invention must stand prohibited in this country." That was his decision in 1832, when I asked him whether he advised our proceeding, for I was very anxious again to prosecute the subject. As to his opinion of its practicability, and therefore that he could not have retired from any feeling or change in his views, I beg to hand in a letter written so late as 1833, in which, after speaking of the continuance of the tolls in opposition to the bill brought in for their relief, and his opinion that they would soon still be repealed, "I continue to possess the same favourable opinion as to its practicability, and have no doubt that at no distant day steam carriages will be of common use on all the common roads." Here are many other letters; and in addition to these letters, which clearly show his feeling upon the practicability of the subject, I will however further mention, that only a fortnight before his death he wrote to Mr. Sandford and Mr. Tynte, the Members for Somerset, requesting they would use their exertions to get rid of the legislative restriction, for without it the subject could not proceed, and that he was anxious to proceed with it; he made it a personal favour that they would do so. I know this to be the case, because he sent the letters unsealed to me, desiring me to read them and deliver them myself. I took them to Mr. Sandford and Mr. Tynte; I saw Mr. Sandford, and we had some conversation upon it. There is no doubt that he recollects the circumstance, and most probably can produce the letter. I called on Mr. Tynte; I did not see him, but I left the letter at his house. Those gentlemen are both now in Parliament, and can be referred to. I mention this circumstance to show that Mr. Hanning, up to his death last year, had precisely the same opinion in regard to the value and with regard to the practicability of the subject that he ever had, and the true and only reason why he suspended the working of his contract.

97. What

97. What do you suppose you lost by the non-fulfilment of Mr. Hanning's contract?—The laying down of the eight carriages, and the direct loss upon that must have amounted to be about 3,000*l.*; the indirect loss is very great; the duty on all the western roads.

98. What were the terms of the contract?—That he was to pay, I think it was, 4*d.* the mile patent duty, and to pay 500*l.* each for the carriages.

99. On all the line contained in that contract?—All the roads west of London.

100. Can you make an estimate at all of the rate of 4*d.* a mile? that of course will give you what would have been the amount per annum, supposing an ordinary number of carriages to have been on the line on the western road?—I can do so, but I should have difficulty in doing it off-hand.

101. Was not the question last year asked of Mr. Ward what he calculated the returns would be to you, at the rate of 4*d.* or 2*d.* a mile?—Yes; he made a calculation upon the roads in Scotland, which he gave in his evidence. "652. Suppose the whole amount of carriages to have been 30, what do you suppose would have been Mr. Gurney's profit upon that? It would depend very much upon the mileage that he fixed upon; we were anxious that he should put a low mileage upon it. The impression upon my mind is that it would have been a very large fortune to Mr. Gurney, if he had fixed 2*d.* per mile."

102. Does he go on to say what he calculated the return would have been?—"654. Suppose 30 carriages run 100 miles a day, at 6*d.* a mile, what would have been the amount of Mr. Gurney's profit in one year?—I made a calculation at the time, and it would have been a very large amount, 2,736*l.*" But the number of carriages on the western roads of England must have exceeded that; it would have taken six or eight carriages to Bath, six or eight carriages to Exeter and Plymouth.

103. How many coaches now run in that direction?—A great many, but I am not prepared to say the number.

104. Had you any other contract with any other party?—There were contracts with several others.

105. Were those contracts given up in consequence of the toll?—Clearly so, decidedly.

106. Is it stated in the evidence before the Committee of the last session that that was the case?—Yes, all the witnesses were agreed as to that point; those who were directly interested acknowledged it, and those who were not interested gave the same evidence.

107. At what do you estimate your loss in consequence of the non-fulfilment of the contract by Sir Charles Dance and Mr. Bulnois?—The loss would be in proportion to the extent of the road. I could prepare an estimate if time was given me, but it would be difficult to say at once.

108. Have you got it down amongst your indirect losses?—I have got the general loss on general roads.

109. Were you to receive from Sir Charles Dance and Mr. Bulnois a mileage duty?—Yes.

110. And to build carriages for them?—For Mr. Bulnois; but Sir Charles Dance intended to build his own, and with that view went, and was about to establish a manufactory at Gloucester.

111. What line had Mr. Bulnois?—He had the south roads.

112. What line had Sir Charles Dance?—Birmingham to Bristol, and London to Holyhead.

113. Would many steam carriages have been required to travel on those roads?—Yes, a great number.

114. At the rate of only 2*d.* mileage duty, would that have amounted in each case to some thousands a year?—A great many thousands. Some idea of the extent may be obtained by reference to the sums paid for carrying the mail; I believe it is 3*d.* a mile. This amounts to an immense sum per year upon all the mails in England; these are very few compared to the coaches that are running.

115. How are the tolls paid?—I believe that Government pay the mail contractors 3*d.* a mile for carrying the mail; if I received a duty of 3*d.*, I should receive the same as the mail contractors now do on the same road, for every coach.

116. Do you know how many thousands a year Government pay to the mail contractors, at the rate of 3*d.* a mile?—I do not know.

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117. At the rate of 3 *d.* a mile, is it your impression that Government have to pay for mails alone upwards of 200,000 *l.* a year?—That is my impression at this moment.

118. If you had had to receive a mileage duty on the earnings of the coaches, which are greater in number than the mails, your return, instead of being less than what the Government now pay, would have been greater?—Yes; if only the same number of coaches as there are now mails had been established, the annual profit would have amounted to about the same that the Government pay now for mails.

119. You have stated your direct loss at 16,000 *l.*; can you give a total of what you conceive to be the extent of your indirect losses?—At least 200,000 *l.*, excluding my loss by giving up my profession and sacrificing 10 years of my time.

120. And not calculating the probable result of establishing your steam carriage in lieu of the common carriages that now run?—I have only taken one-tenth, knowing it to be impossible that the roads could all be covered within the duration of my patent.

121. It appears that there were several joint patentees with you, namely, Sir Charles Dance and Mr. Hanning; what share had you?—I had, I think, remaining about one-third, and there was one-third on which Mr. Hanning and myself had not decided; so that I may be said to have two-thirds of the patent.

122. And do you estimate your loss as two-thirds of the whole loss?—In the contingent loss I have reckoned it as two-thirds, but in the direct loss it is wholly my own loss.

123. Your calculation is in the ratio of two-thirds?—In the contingent estimate.

124. There is no one-third to be deducted from that, in favour of the co-patentees?—No.

125. Your patent, however, has been in legal operation ever since that time?—It has.

126. Since that time steam carriages have been applied extensively to railroads?—Yes.

127. How is it that your patent has not been profitable to you from that application of steam to railroads?—Because my patents have a specific object. I had devoted my experiments to this object, and all my experiments and improvements were made in connection with the common turnpike roads.

128. Then your patent does not apply particularly to railroads?—Railroads do not require a particular engine, they can do with ordinary high-pressure engines.

129. On the contrary, it applies to common roads?—Yes.

130. Have you a wish to return to that prosecution of your steam carriage?—I am most anxious; it has been the great object of my life; I am still as strongly as ever impressed with its importance; and perhaps more anxious now than ever, because it has been taken up by so many engineers without advancing the subject. I believe success rests on certain points specified in my patents; every attempt to work without these have failed; therefore I should feel, as you may easily imagine, more personal satisfaction to establish the subject if I had the means of doing it, independent of other motives. In regard to these points, I would refer to the evidence of all the scientific men who were examined last session; amongst the rest to Mr. Farraday, Dr. Lardner, Mr. Gordon—

131. Is Mr. Gordon an engineer?—Yes, a practical engineer and man of science. I would refer also to the evidence of the celebrated mathematician, Mr. M'Neil, who also is a practical engineer, and others.

132. They were examined before the Committee last year?—Yes; they all agreed that the subject could not be practically established or introduced without the points I have previously alluded to.

133. What is the reason, if you conceive the practicability and usefulness of your steam carriage to be fully proved, that we hear of so many failures by other people in running these steam carriages?—Because they are in a state of experiment only; and many have neglected to use the actual requisites for practical perfection.

134. Could they have used those without invading your patent?—I do not think they could. Some of them use separation, for instance, without circulation; others use circulation without separation; others use large boilers, too heavy to propel themselves with any advantage.

135. If other parties may apply the principle of circulation separately and separation separately, why may they not use them in combination without invading your patent?—Because this combination is the great point of my patent.

136. These

136. These subsequent trials have been made, not with a view of practically applying steam engines to general use for roads, but rather for the purpose of trying new experiments, for which the inventors hope to take out their own patent?—I think so.

137. Therefore their failure does not at all show that your invention would not have succeeded?—Decidedly not.

138. The same difficulties which have prevented your application from becoming lucrative on practical application, would have prevented the success of your experiments had they got over the mechanical difficulty eventually as completely as you did?—No doubt of it. At the time I stopped I had no experiment to make, except what would turn up and require improvement in long practice.

139. All the roads were not included in those turnpike Acts?—No.

140. What was it then, when you were driven off those roads, that has all this time prevented the application of your invention to the roads on which the tolls were not raised?—First, the want of sufficient means myself; secondly, the impossibility of getting any new contracts taken while the tolls were levying, and because on the roads which were known to be contracted for, prohibitory tolls were immediately put on; and, thirdly, because after waiting to ascertain whether the tolls would be taken off or still be levied (we waited the result of the bill which was brought into the House of Commons for that purpose, and which bill was thrown out in the Lords), no one would now become engaged in the subject, and no one would dare to go on any road as a new contractor, from the refusal, as it was believed, on the part of the Legislature to repeal those Acts, and in the belief that as soon as they ran on the road they would be stopped, and thus the subject has continued; the old contractors, as will appear from this evidence, were all bound up by tolls on their roads.

141. What prevented you forming contracts with new men?—No new man would contract with me under the circumstances.

142. What prevented you forming contracts with persons on roads where there were no tolls existing?—The fact of their being put on as we attempted to go on. I would state that on Sir Charles Dance's road from Birmingham to Bristol, he states, there was a toll of eight guineas laid on, on one trust, as soon as it was known that it was the intention to run on it.

143. How long did Sir Charles Dance run his carriage successfully?—Four months; upwards of 60 miles a day.

144. He has run upwards of 60 miles a day for four months, between Cheltenham and Gloucester?—Yes.

145. Without any accident?—Yes.

146. That was your carriage?—Yes. All the evidence examined in 1831, and in the last session, speak as to the fact; and Mr. Stone gives an account of the journies, the time, minutes, and all circumstances connected with it.

147. If you had the means, would you establish a steam carriage in the public service?—Yes, directly.

148. Do you conceive the failure of those parties who have been attempting to run steam carriages, and daring not to invade your patent, so as to complete the carriage, has operated as a prejudice against your carriage?—No doubt of it; the public only look to the results, without going into the cause; they believe, on this broad principle, that I have failed.

149. In fact, the carriages which have failed are not your carriages, but carriages which attempted to fulfil your principle by other means than those contained in your patent?—They are other carriages built by other persons, on different principles.

150. Carriages on what you call an imperfect and vicious principle?—Certainly imperfect.

151. And though they may know the right principle they dare not adopt it, because that principle is yours, and you have a patent right to protect it?—That is my opinion; but I would rather refer to the opinions of others, because they are not interested, and therefore entitled to greater credit. Dr. Lardner, in his evidence of last session, gives a minute description of the carriage and points connected with it essential to success. He is then asked, "905. Do you conceive that steam carriages could have been run on common roads without all the advantages you have described as emanating from Mr. Gurney's invention? *A.* I decidedly think not, though those advantages may possibly be obtained by other means; but obtained they must be, otherwise they could not run with advantage." 889, he

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is asked, "Are you of opinion that circulation is essential to a boiler of that kind?—*A.* Quite essential; indeed all attempt it more or less; it is indispensable."

152. They cannot accomplish the conjunction of the separation and circulation without invading your patent?—They cannot. Mr. M'Neil is asked, "972. In what respect does the boiler which is being made by Messrs. Maudsley and Field differ from that of Mr. Gurney?—I believe the difference is, that there is no separator." Then, "1070. Do you think any of them are looking to the end of Mr. Gurney's patent?—I have no doubt, if Mr. Gurney's patent was thrown open to-morrow, there would be many steam carriages commenced that are not now thought of."—"1071. Do you conceive that it would be a great advantage to the public if Mr. Gurney's patent was thrown open?—I think so." In paragraph 1049, he gives an account of some of the different carriages which have attempted to run, and their peculiarities; he comes to the conclusion that they have not adopted those great points. Then he is asked, "1072. Do you think, considering the failure that has taken place, if persons were able to follow out Mr. Gurney's invention without fear of trespassing upon his patent, that steam carriages would be more safe to the public?—I believe they are all safe enough; but I am of opinion steam carriages would be brought much sooner into general use if the patent was thrown open, that every person could avail himself of the advantage which has been gained by Mr. Gurney's experience; for I am persuaded that several have put themselves to great trouble to avoid infringing his patent." I will not take up more time in reading extracts, but hope the Committee will refer to the extensive evidence of last session given by the various witnesses on this head.

153. Was there not some dispute before the Committee in last session as to the time that Hancock took out his patent?—There was an inquiry as to the date of all the patents. Mr. Poole was called and examined.

154. Who is Mr. Poole?—He is in the Patent Office. Having been called, he is asked, "1216. Have you the date of any patent from Mr. Hancock?—Yes, in 1825." This is a mistake of print, I believe.

155. When were the two first patents on the subject of steam carriages?—1825. Seeing there was a mistake on a question of date, I wrote to Mr. Poole of the Patent Office yesterday, and requested to be informed on the point. I stated, that as a Committee on my case was sitting, he had better write to the Chairman on the subject, or attend. [*The following letter was then put in, and read.*]

"Sir, "Patent Office, Lincoln's Inn, May 18, 1835.

"Having received a letter from Mr. G. Gurney, stating that in the evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, Mr. Poole is stated to have given the date of Walter Hancock's patent as sealed in the year 1825, I beg to inform you that such date must be a misprint, the patent not having passed till 1827. Mr. Poole being absent, I have examined the books of the office, and write in reply to Mr. Gurney.

"I am your obedient servant,

"for Mr. *Poole*,

"*Wm. Carpmall.*"

"*P. S.* The Title, Walter Hancock, of Stratford, Essex, engineer: Invention, 'An improvement or improvements upon steam-engines.' King's warrant came into this office the 30th day of May 1827, consequently the patent could not be sealed for some days.

"*Wm. Carpmall.*"

156. Can you refer to any evidence given before the Committee in the last session as to the indisputable fact of your being the first person who brought steam carriages to run on common roads to a practical bearing?—All the witnesses agree on this point. Dr. Lardner is asked, "879. Can you speak as to the originality of Mr. Gurney's invention of a steam carriage to run on common roads?—Yes; the originality lies in the boiler, I believe, chiefly; it is the first of the kind which was used; Mr. Gurney's was the first steam carriage for turnpike roads of any kind which I know of."—"882. Is it your opinion that Mr. Gurney was the first person who brought steam carriages to run on common roads to a practical bearing?—Decidedly; I entertain no doubt about it." I could go on to other evidence, which is precisely the same in point, if required.

157. Does

157. Does Mr. M'Neil's, Mr. Gordon's and Mr. Farraday's evidence all go to the same effect?—Yes; and so does all the rest.

158. Would not an extension of your patent obtain for you ample means of prosecuting the subject of steam carriages?—The simple extension of the patent would not, because I have not the private means myself, and in the present state of public feeling, I do not think I should be likely to obtain it; besides, other persons are in the field to contend with me, and some may succeed. And again, from the suspension and withdrawal from Gloucester, an opinion exists, which I think would render it very difficult to be able to make a favourable impression upon capitalists. The railroads are now cutting also on the great roads, which affects steam on common roads.

159. Would not an extension of the patent, and the possibility of the Act prohibiting the payment of tolls, enable you in some measure to cover your loss?—It is possible it might; I think not myself, because of the difficulties stated in my previous answer. Even if the tolls were taken off now, I should have the same difficulties to fight over again which I had in 1830.

160. Even if the tolls were taken off?—Yes; without capital I can do nothing; and I should be obliged to re-establish a carriage before I could remove the false impression that now exists in the public mind in regard to success.

161. You conceive nothing the Legislature can do now would put you in as favourable a situation as you were in in 1830 before the prohibition of the tolls?—I think not, connected with the patent.

162. Nothing short of direct remuneration?—Such is my opinion.

163. Do you think that the failure of the imperfect carriages has operated so much to prejudice the public mind against steam carriages, that it would require some time and a great deal of money to overcome those prejudices?—It would require a great deal of time and a great deal of money.

164. In consequence of losses you have sustained from the imposition of those prohibitory tolls, and the suspension of your carriage, have you the means now within your reach of prosecuting the subject?—No, not to meet the difficulties; not to prosecute it, certainly.

165. Even if Parliament were to grant you an extension of your patent, do you conceive that you would neither have the immediate means of prosecuting it, or that if you had, the competition which has arisen since your suspension of the subject would very much obviate the chance you would have of gaining by such extension of the patent?—I have not the means, and the competition would no doubt interfere for some time.

166. Do you not conceive it would be rather an hardship on those persons who have been attempting to run steam carriages for the last three or four years, during the period that you have suspended your operations, and have expended a great deal of money upon it, to extend your patent after its natural termination?—I think it would, because there are many points of my patent which possibly they have been looking to, and calculating on to join their own, and have gone into experiments and expended money in that anticipation; I have no hesitation in saying that would be my case, under the circumstances.

167. Would you, if those prohibitory tolls were removed, be enabled to make fresh contracts for those roads for which you had contracts before, but which contracts were not fulfilled?—The parties are all gone off. Mr. Hanning, the great contractor, is dead; Sir Charles Dance, in a bad state of health, is on the banks of the Rhine, and the others possibly cannot be regained; therefore if the subject be now opened, I have a new connection entirely to form; besides, no one would contract now without protection, or under so short a term of patent right.

168. If you had no extension of your patent, is it likely that you would have any large offers for contracts for so short a period as three or four years, which is the term your patent has now to run?—No one would enter into the subject for so short a period, as I have previously stated.

169. In fact, unless there was an extension of your patent you would derive little or no advantage from the removal of the prohibitory tolls?—I do not think I should be; at none whatever.

170. What sum of money do you think would enable you to prosecute the subject, provided you had an extension of your patent for five or seven years beyond the natural term of it, and provided the prohibitory tolls were removed?—I think 3,000*l.* would afford me the means of building a carriage, and the means of running

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ning it for a short time, so as to establish it against local opposition again publicly in the good opinion of capitalists, and possibly then I might be able to go on.

171. Provided you have an extension of your patent?—Without, it would not be worth while. I think, if with the extension of the patent was coupled a power of vesting it in more than five persons, or of forming a company of capitalists who would not be answerable to the laws of partnerships, that I should be enabled to get the means of carrying the subject into operation; but until the carriage was built, and running upon the road, and the imputation, or rather the onus, that now lies upon it was removed, I do not think anybody would speculate upon it.

172. At present, according to the particular laws that now exist, there is some limitation as to the number of partners?—They cannot exceed five; steam inland transport is too great a subject to be introduced by one, two, three, four or five; it must be introduced by large capitalists, not only to meet the mechanical expense of building, but the opposition that will and must arise from interested persons.

173. Still with the advantage of having 3,000 *l.* to start with, and with an extension of, say seven years, of your patent, you still would have to meet with the difficulty of competition which has arisen in consequence of your suspension of the subject for so long a time?—Clearly so; 3,000 *l.* would put me in the same position with regard to the public opinion as I was in in 1830.

174. Do you conceive that the persons who are now running steam carriages have obtained any of that knowledge from the workmen you were obliged to dismiss so suddenly?—No doubt of it.

175. And which dismissal of your workmen arose from the imposition of the prohibitory tolls by the Legislature?—It became a matter of necessity on the suspension of the manufactory.

176. These prohibitory tolls were imposed chiefly in 1831?—They were all imposed at the time the carriages were running at Gloucester.

177. That was in 1831?—Yes.

178. Did you not petition Parliament immediately upon the subject for the removal of those prohibitory tolls?—The next day after I heard of it.

179. Did not a Committee sit upon the subject of those prohibitory tolls immediately after the presentation of your petition?—Yes.

180. Did not that Committee recommend the immediate removal of those prohibitory tolls, and was not a Bill passed by the House of Commons to effect that object?—The Committee recommended it; a Bill was brought in and passed the House of Commons in consequence, but it was thrown out in the Lords.

181. How many prohibitory Acts were passed against you upon your carriage in 1831?—I do not now recollect the number fully; there were a great many.

182. All directed against the running of your carriage?—All containing the prohibitory clauses.

183. Were prohibitory tolls imposed on all the great lines for which you had entered into contracts with other people?—Yes; some more, some less. On the great north contract, Mr. Ward states, on an average they were 1 *s.* a mile, para. 668.

184. Does the evidence of last year generally concur in the practicability of your steam carriage?—The whole of the evidence goes to prove it; no one differs in opinion upon the subject.

185. Does Dr. Lardner, Mr. M'Neil, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Farraday, and other scientific men, all concur in that opinion?—All of them, and also all the engineers practically engaged.

186. You have stated that the practicability is fully proved, but that the circumstances at the present time are less favorable to you than they were at the time when you were compelled to suspend your experiments?—Yes, arising from the circumstances I have stated.

187. And all those impediments have arisen in consequence of legislative interference?—Decidedly.

188. The evidence of last session concurs in that opinion?—It all goes unquestionably to establish it.

Martis, 16° *die Junii*, 1835.

E. S. CAYLEY, ESQUIRE, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. *William Anderson Portal*, called in; and Examined.

Mr. *W. A. Portal.*

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189. WHERE do you reside?—In Clifford's-Inn.

190. What is your profession?—I am an attorney and solicitor.

191. Are you Mr. Gurney's solicitor?—Yes.

192. Were you consulted by Mr. Gurney on the subject of his contracts for running steam carriages on certain roads?—Repeatedly.

193. When were you last consulted by him?—Why, I may say from 1826 to 1832 I have been constantly consulted by him, but not much since 1832.

194. What was the nature of your last consultation with him?—I cannot call to recollection, but the general subject then was the difficulty there was in bringing the invention to bear, on account of the heavy tolls which had been imposed upon the road. That was the subject generally of conversation, but the last in particular I cannot recollect.

195. Did Mr. Gurney consult you with respect to the contract that he had with Mr. Ward for his coach patent?—Yes.

196. Do you remember Mr. Ward refusing to fulfil the terms of that contract?—I understood he did do so, but I never saw Mr. Ward upon the subject myself.

197. Who did you understand so from?—From Mr. Gurney and from Mr. Hanning, in the course of conversation with them upon it.

198. What did Mr. Gurney state to you?—Mr. Gurney stated to me that Mr. Ward had declined to fulfil his contract in consequence of the heavy tolls which had been imposed.

199. Did Mr. Gurney consult you as to the possibility of enforcing that contract?—He consulted me generally as to the possibility of enforcing the fulfilment of all his contracts, and that with the rest.

200. What was your advice?—My advice was not to attempt it by action at law, that he could not by possibility succeed.

201. State your reasons?—Because the interests of the different contractors were so mixed up that they might defend on the ground of a partnership.

202. What did you recommend?—I should have recommended a suit in equity, because I apprehended, if he had gone to law, they would have gone into equity immediately to stop his proceeding at law.

203. Did you ever hear of any stipulation on the part of Mr. Ward, that he should not be liable to have this contract enforced against him if any legislative prohibition with regard to tolls had taken place?—That not only applied to Mr. Ward's, but to the other contracts; there was that understanding.

204. Can you state of your own knowledge that there was an understanding of that kind with Mr. Ward?—Yes, there was; and I have no doubt an understanding with Mr. Ward upon the subject.

205. Then if there was that understanding with Mr. Ward, why was it necessary to discuss the point of going to law?—The question was as to enforcing the contracts. It would still have left an opinion as to whether any abatement should be made, and it was a question of abatement. I do not know that it would vitiate the contract entirely if loans should be made.

206. What loans?—Pecuniary loans.

207. To what extent?—The amount must depend upon the tolls levied, and upon the consequent detriment to the contractor.

208. Then if legislative interference went to the extent of making the patent valueless, it vitiated the contract altogether?—Undoubtedly: amounting to a prohibition, I apprehend it would vitiate the contract altogether.

209. And that was your opinion with respect to these tolls, that they acted as a prohibition of the steam carriages, and therefore virtually vitiated the contract?—Certainly;

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Certainly; I have no doubt of it. In a conversation I had with Mr. Hanning, I found this was his opinion.

210. Had not Mr. Hanning a contract also with Mr. Gurney?—Yes, a considerable one.

211. Did he ever state to you that the prohibitory tolls imposed by Parliament were the cause of his giving up his contract?—Certainly he did; I recollect that conversation perfectly. I waited upon him to know if he would make a further advance in order to carry on his contract, and he distinctly said, "No, under existing circumstances; I am persuaded until these tolls are repealed it never can succeed."

212. Have you every reason to believe that was the main cause of Mr. Hanning's refusing to fulfil the contract?—I believe so from his own statement to me.

Mr. *Goldsworthy Gurney*, called in; and Examined.

Mr. *G. Gurney.*

213. Mr. GURNEY, you were requested by the Committee to ascertain the number of prohibitory tolls that have been imposed since the year 1831; have you ascertained that fact?—I have. I have examined the statutes, but have not had so much time as is required to go through the whole of them. I have selected, I think, about 150 in addition to those already produced.

214. What are the rates of toll imposed upon steam carriages generally?—In most cases about ten times as much as are imposed upon horse coaches.

215. Ten times as much as upon four-horse coaches, or upon four horses?—Upon four horses, six times as much; they vary very much; in fact, I can hardly make out the true charge. The tolls upon some are placed upon the horses, in some upon the weight, and in some upon the passengers. It is very difficult therefore to make out the toll at all, and scarcely possible to draw a comparison with horse coaches, but as far as I have been able, they vary from six to ten times as much. Some amount to 2*l.* 10*s.*; a great number to 16*s.*, 8*s.*, 6*s.*, 5*s.*; horses pay 1*s.*, 6*d.*, 8*d.* These Acts have been passed principally upon the roads contracted for, or proposed to be.

216. For running your carriages?—Yes.

217. Are you aware of any application that has been made to Parliament since 1831 to take off these prohibitory tolls?—There was a bill brought in in 1832 for the purpose of fixing an equitable toll on steam carriages, which was lost in the Lords.

218. But since 1832?—I am informed that last year a company, which Sir Henry Parnell and Mr. Telford attempted to establish for the purpose of running steam carriages to Holyhead, was prevented going on in consequence of the proposed opposition that was raised to the fixing a general and equitable toll.

219. Did the parties who were endeavouring to form that company make any application to Parliament to remove these prohibitory tolls?—I think they did, but I am not certain.

220. Who is your informant?—The engineer of the company.

221. Have you reason to believe it a true statement, that there was an opposition in the House of Lords, that they refused to remove the prohibitory tolls so late as the last year?—I am so informed.

222. Upon what ground?—I think it was upon the ground of interfering with vested rights, with private trusts.

223. The turnpike trusts?—Yes.

REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

MR. GOLDSWORTHY GURNEY'S CASE

WITH THE

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, *to be Printed,*
10 *July* 1835.